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AN OLD  
EDUCATIONAL REFORMER  
DR. ANDREW BELL

PROFESSOR MEIKLEJOHN.







*With the Author's Compliment*

DR ANDREW BELL



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AN OLD EDUCATIONAL REFORMER

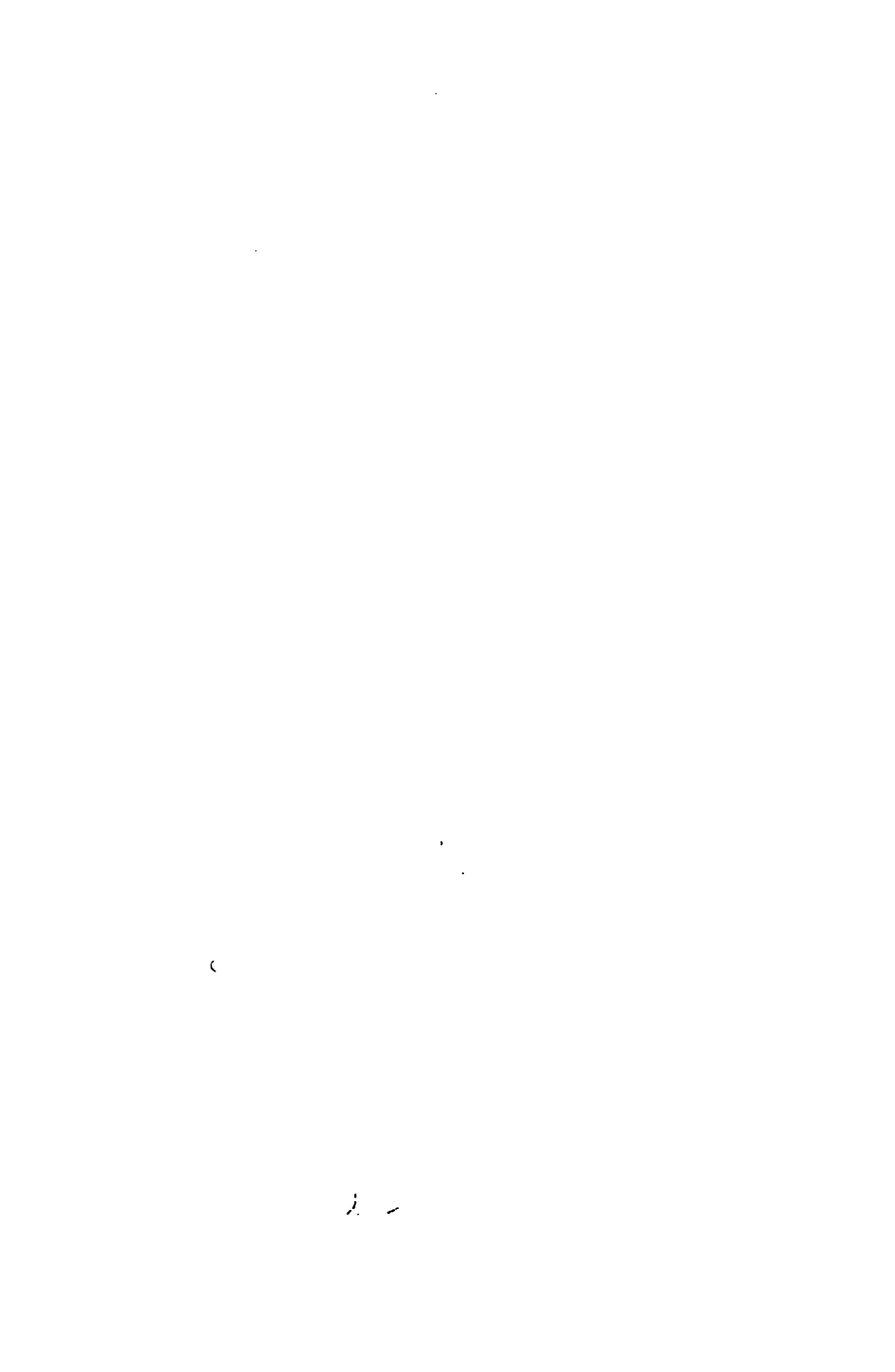
DR ANDREW BELL

BY  
  
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=  
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OF ST ANDREWS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCCLXXXI





TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL OF LEVEN AND MELVILLE, K.T.  
AND  
JOHN COOK, ESQUIRE,  
WRITER TO H.M. SIGNET  
*The Trustees of Dr Bell's Will,*  
AND THE FOUNDERS OF  
THE TWO CHAIRS OF EDUCATION IN THE  
UNIVERSITIES OF EDINBURGH AND ST ANDREWS,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



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# LIFE OF DR BELL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ST ANDREWS.

ANDREW BELL was born in the city of St Andrews on the 27th of March 1753.

St Andrews is a place so full of contrasts between new and old, town and country, barbarism and Christianity, that one or two words may be useful about it. The traveller on reaching it sees at once that he has fallen out of the ordinary track—has gone away from the common world, and that he has come into an out-lying place,—which cannot be judged by the usual standards we apply to villages, and towns, and cities. Such a cold stony hideousness of street, such a glory of sky, alternately chills and depresses, or lifts and inspires him. Old ruins, rising up bare and gaunt into the heaven, long reaches of monotonous street, quiet fields looking suddenly in upon the town, a bay of the most changeful hues—sometimes black as night, at other times of a blue as deep as the Mediterranean, or

white as molten silver,—steep cliffs, softly moulded hills, and over all a sky of the most various and transcendent beauty—a beauty that is new every few minutes,—these are the features that keep the new-comer in a mixed condition of wonder and dissatisfaction. The sky is most beautiful in winter; for in these high latitudes the sun is low, even at high noon. He does not send his rays down to the earth to enable work-people to get through their work, but he flings them all abroad through the wide and open sky, to light it up with richest gold, to sprinkle over it light traces of green and grey; and, towards afternoon, when the barred clouds lie in long stretches along the low sky, to touch with deepest calm some narrow opening into the beyond. In the evening, as the clouds meet towards the west over the setting sun, there are here and there rifts and openings between them, like quiet lakes of soft light, in which the calm is the visible expression—the true symbol to the fleshly eye of “the peace that passes all understanding.”

The look of some of the streets, even now, is the look of the fifteenth century. Knubbly and rough, like the streets of a Continental town, they must have been, as they still are, trying to the feet of the enthusiastic pilgrim. Perhaps a cart slowly rumbles through one of them once an hour, and this serves to intensify the silence. Winds from the sea push in vast body or in sudden gusts along the wide avenues; and when a storm sends the waves dashing into the rocky coves that line the Scores,<sup>1</sup> the white thready foam is carried

<sup>1</sup> This word is a corruption of *scar* or *scaurs*, the old English word for a steep *cut-away* cliff.

in large flakes, over house and church-steeple, away to the farthest end of the little wind-swept city. From the west, too, wind-currents find their way easily through it; so that there is no stagnant air, and no close vapours, but everywhere an openess, a skyey influence, and a largeness of air all about.

Approach it from the south—from the hills that bound it—and the traveller sees it set in a framework of river, and sea, and wood; while the pilgrims of the middle ages, surmounting their last hill, halted at an iron cross which still stands on the Hill of the King,<sup>1</sup> and, falling on their knees at sight of the sacred spires, thanked God that it was at length given them to behold the DIVINE with the eyes of flesh. Stand in the middle of the Links: between the gaps of the sand-hills flashes towards you the deep sunlit blue of the bay-waves; you feel on a platform ringed with deep-blue sea, which is itself again ringed with an outer and infinite sky. Sky-born of the sky the whole region looks; while the town itself seems a heavenly Jerusalem let down upon the nether earth to teach a higher doctrine to the sons of men.

The people are notoriously long-lived. You meet old men and women whom, from their experienced looks, you might judge to be well over a hundred; and exhausted constitutions of seventy come here, renew their youth, enjoy their lives, and hold on happily till ninety. It is the strong dry air, the absorbing exercise of golf, the play of social amenity, that lift them out of depression and senility. For here there

<sup>1</sup> Balrymont.



are traditions of culture and civility that have been passed on from century to century, and the influence of which leavens the social life and moulds the social manners. Here are more than a thousand years of Christianity; and the visible symbols of it, in tower and steeple and window, catch the eye at innumerable points. There are three distinct layers—the Celtic, the Roman, and the modern Protestant Christianity. The Celtic layer is represented by the leaning square tower of St Regulus, of the simplest form, but the most stern and solid character. The Roman layer is represented by the ruins of the Abbey, and the lovely window of the ancient monastery of the Blackfriars. While the Protestant—not constructive or architectural in any way—has raised for itself a number of the ugliest little chapels that even a Scotch town can boast of. But these traditions of Christianity and culture have left their mark most deeply on the character of the inhabitants. A sweet *naïveté* permeates the place.

“ One reverence still the untainted race inspires ;  
God their first thought, and after God their sires ;—  
These last discerned Astræa’s flying hem,  
And Virtue’s latest footsteps walked with them.”

Clergyman, soldier, professor, physician, landowner, chimney-sweep, carpenter, ploughman, farmer, and tax-gatherer mix upon equal and brotherly terms, and each is always on the look-out to oblige his neighbour. Exclusiveness is neither known nor understood. On this happy plateau the schism of classes has never existed, but every man walks in a kindly atmosphere of neighbourliness and goodwill. The clack of disputing tongues, the appeal

to an unsympathetic and matter-of-fact law, the imputation of evil motives,—these things, so common in the smaller towns of Scotland, are never heard of in St Andrews. Here might *Astræa Redux* take lodgings for the sea-bathing of the summer months, and send her boys and girls to the schools and colleges for the winter. It is true there are religious sects, but these exist chiefly for the sake of friendly discussion, and the generous rivalry of doing good. Episcopalian and Presbyterian, Churchman and Dissenter, frequent each other's churches, and "fill" each other's pulpits, and are eager for nothing but the promotion of the constant Gospel of Christ. Perhaps the old Roman Catholic form of Christianity is most weakly represented here. It has only one adherent, and he is a minor official of the town. But then his chief is an archbishop, and this does a great deal more than make up. Besides an archbishop, we have also a bishop—the distinguished nephew of the lasting poet Wordsworth. In addition to a bishop and an archbishop, the Presbyterian part of the community has also a city clergyman, who, to be in harmony with the general quaintness of the place, is known to fame and to both worlds as "the Country Parson."

Two great interests share the life of the place—the University and Golf. The University is far from large, but it can boast of more famous men in proportion to its size than any other university in Great Britain. The quadrangle of St Mary's College has a quiet loveliness which attracts every one, and reminds the visitor of the Clarendon Press quadrangle at Oxford; and the steeple of the United College Chapel is of a simple

beauty and perfect proportion unsurpassed—and not often equalled—by that of any piece of architecture either in England or on the Continent. The professors live—when they can—an enviable life of quiet study; and between them and the students the pleasantest relations subsist. Hundreds of men look back upon their academic days at St Andrews as by far the happiest in their lives. There they lie, far back in the happy fields of memory, a part of heaven rather than of earth, but every now and then carrying into the noise and hurry of the crowded street a wave of calm, a peace that hallows and soothes the fevered nerves, the bounding emotions, or the surging brain.

Golf is, however, the more permanent staple of the place. It is to golf that Andrew Bell most probably owes his moral education. Statements we print, moralities we utter, which the child learns by “heart” and repeats, have probably no effect whatever on the character; for there is no *tertium quid*, no mediating influence, by which they can cross over to the habitual thoughts and daily actions of a person; and it is these thoughts and actions that go to mould the coming man. But golf is in itself an education. It is an education of the highest value. It embodies and carries into practice one of the noblest arts—the art of living a good and healthy life. It trains to attention, to concentration, and to tranquillity. The player takes his stand in a condition of perfect balance: every power of body and mind, of nerve and muscle, is braced up, rallied to point, under the guidance of a single eye; the weapon is swung easily at the full stretch of the arm; it is slowly

lifted, describes the largest possible circle, and descends with a concentration of sweep and force upon the ball, the whole ball, and nothing but the ball. The reflex action upon the consciousness of the player of a good stroke is probably more healthy and complete than any sense of virtue to which human mortal can in this life attain. The maxims: No zeal or hurry; act upon the largest circle; have a single eye; mind and body in perfect balance and free swing; the longest leverage you can find in your favour; never take your eye off your purpose,—these are surely as good maxims for living as any moral philosopher has yet been able to lay down. This presence of the maximum of thought with the minimum of anxiety,—this absolute freedom from care—this absorbing tranquillity,—approaches more nearly to the Greek idea of *ataraxia* than anything we possess in modern times. It is therefore the best preparation for the highest thinking—for that which is not to be attained by importunity and *improbis labor*, but which comes, if it comes at all, as a heaven-sent gift:—

“ Und wer nicht denkt  
Dem ist sie beschenkt  
Er hat sie ohne Sorgen.”

That some golfers do not rise to the highest heights of human perfection is no argument against the splendid qualities of the game, but only a proof that these players are men of arrested development—have been content with a mean, have considered it as a finality, and have never looked beyond. But in a world like this, the chief object in self-education should be to connect all

we do with the intellectual and moral growth of the soul, and to remember with the pious George Herbert, how—

“The man that looks on glass  
On it may stay his eye ;  
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,  
And then the heaven espy.”

There are few more perfect systems of gymnastic for mind and body than the game of golf.

Bell's father was a barber in the city. This noble profession has dwindled much since the time when Henry VIII. presented a charter to the barber-surgeons of his day. The schism which is the fate of human things, and which, on one side, is nowadays dignified with the title of “division of labour” (whereas it should be called monotony and restriction of labour), has overtaken the barber-surgeon. The surgeons have gone inside the head, have penetrated into the inner secrets of the human body; the barbers have been content to remain outside. Alexander Bell was, however, far more than an ordinary barber of the present day. His was an architectonic calling: he did not cut hair, he built hair. He was often to be met in South Street—the wide, tree-lined, and majestic street which stretches from the West Port to the Priory, and worthily the pride of St Andrews—carrying on each hand an elaborate and highly dressed wig, carefully apart, so that no collision might disarrange their form or dispel their powder. This was in the morning: and, after fitting one professor with his wig, he would sit down and breakfast with him, and then away to another professor

with his wig, and he would sit down and breakfast with *him*,—"his appetite" says Southey, "like his mouth" (and his mind also) "being of remarkable and well-known capacity." This extensive appetite, which was moral as well as physical, his son Andrew seems to have inherited. Alexander Bell belonged to what is known as the higher classes. He and his wife were the first persons in the city to introduce the drinking of tea,—they possessed a tea-service of china; he was himself bailie of the city (and in that capacity at one time put down a furious meal-mob by his own personal weight); and he was in the habit of assisting Dr Walker, the professor of natural philosophy, in the preparation of his experiments.

Dr Bell was descended, on the mother's side, from a Captain Cavale, of the Horse Grenadier Guards, who came over to England with William of Orange, and settled in St Andrews as a wine merchant. His mother had in her blood a strain of insanity, which in later years developed itself into mania and suicide. Andrew was the second son. At the age of four some friend gave the little boy a penny, upon receiving which he seized on one of his brother's books, set off to school, and offered his penny as his quarter's fee. Those were the days when a large part of school education consisted of flogging, and by far the greater majority of teachers believed and acted upon the dogma, "*Nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu.*" They were as thorough enemies of the *a priori* as Locke himself: it was the contrary method they preferred and employed; it was the other end of a child's being to which they appealed. Dr

Bell himself used to say, "I never went to school without trembling. I could not tell whether I should be flogged or not." And Mr Southey adds: "Schools were everywhere conducted in those days upon a system of brutal severity, which never ought to have existed except when the master happened to be a man of singular humanity"—a sentence of curious and extraordinary significance.

Little Bell did not know much, but what he knew, he knew thoroughly, and never forgot. This he achieved by not trusting to his memory—I mean to the will-memory. His verbal memory was so weak that he never could get correctly by heart a single rule in his Latin syntax, but he could apply the rule with perfect judgment. His reasoning and inquiring powers were always active and at work; and, while still a child, he wrote a little book of arithmetic for himself. He left school with a fair knowledge of Latin, and no Greek.

In the year 1769, Andrew Bell, then at the age of sixteen, was matriculated as a student of the United College of St Salvator and St Leonard's. Though the youngest pupil in the mathematical class, he rose to be the head of it; and he also distinguished himself in several other classes in his college. He eked out the bursary he held, and his other scanty resources, by private teaching. He was ready to teach anything at a few hours' notice, for he could always, as he said, prepare over-night for the lesson of the next day; and thus what he had to teach he acquired as he went along. So simple is the art of teaching, so near does it lie to every man who chooses to take it up. I remember

meeting in Washington the head of a famous American college for ladies, who assured me she "could teach anything, if she had the books."

Of all his studies, mathematics and natural philosophy were his favourites, and in the latter he even rose to the stage of original inquiry. To this he remained true through life; and his master, Dr Wilkie, the Professor of Natural Philosophy, told him that he "never knew a man fail of success in the world, if he excelled in one thing."

This Dr Wilkie was a remarkable man. He was a clergyman, a professor, a poet, an agriculturist of deep insight, and a political economist. He came of a family so poor that, when his father died, he had to borrow money to bury him; and so hard, that when he asked his uncle for a loan of £10 for the funeral expenses, that gentleman declined. He was never able to rid himself of a perpetual feeling and gruesome consciousness of the horrors of poverty. He used to say, "I have shaken hands with poverty up to the elbow, and I don't want to see her face ever again." In agriculture his rule was deep ploughing and plenty of manure, clean ground, and rich feeding for it. He went about the back streets of the town picking up, says Southey, "dead cats, dogs, and horses, for the purpose of giving them, not decent burial, but profitable interment." He studied the qualities of different soils, gave good wages to his servants, and raised better crops than any of his neighbours. But the thoughtful man, though rewarded by nature, was overreached by his fellow-men, and he was "always cheated in the market."



Constantly fighting with poverty, but determined to make his own way in the world, he came to the conclusion, after long and careful thought, that the best way of promoting his interests was to write an epic poem. This would be fame, and fame was then the road to wealth. Philosophy would find few readers; theology or a volume of sermons would either have roused bitter suspicion, or have met with total neglect; a tragedy from a minister of the Kirk would have been a scandal; a novel he would have liked to write, but he could hardly found upon a novel a just claim to preferment: an epic poem—and nothing else—it must be. Even when this point had been settled, there came the miseries of choice—he had to look out for a subject; and he was again burdened with “the weight of too much liberty.” He at length chose the Second War of Thebes as his subject, and he called his poem “The Epigoniad.”

While engaged in the “composition” of his epic, he tilled the ground with his own hands, gave or found employment for the poor, took care of his sisters (who would have sunk into indigence but for him), preached for neighbouring ministers—but always extempore—and pursued his own physical studies. His adviser was an old woman. Like Molière, he employed her as the test of his verses; and if any line displeased or failed to strike her, he altered, retouched, and recast it, until at length it succeeded in conquering her approbation. This old woman, Margaret Paton, is probably the only person who ever read the whole poem. He had many other virtues and peculiarities. The potatoes he pro-

duced were so good, that he was known as the potato-minister; he generally preached with his hat on, and often forgot to pronounce the blessing at the close of the service; he chewed tobacco; he was fond of receiving medical advice—which he constantly disputed, and generally rejected; he preferred to sleep under four-and-twenty blankets; and he ardently longed for the power of “firmly believing in all the doctrines of Christianity.”

## CHAPTER II.

## AMERICA.

To return to Andrew Bell. He passed through the classes of the college with considerable success; and, seeing no prospect of remunerative labour in his native city, he began to cast his eyes over the world. The colonies attracted him most, and by accident an offer came to him from Virginia. He accordingly went to Glasgow, and embarked for America at the age of twenty. He was there for seven years, of which there is little or no record. In 1774 he was engaged as private tutor, at a salary of £200 a-year (paid sometimes in money, sometimes in tobacco, and sometimes not at all), in the family of a Mr Carter Braxton, a merchant of West Point, Virginia. But in addition to teaching, Andrew Bell found time to engage in commercial transactions of various kinds—his dealings being chiefly in American currency and tobacco.

He left Virginia in March 1781. Mr Braxton thought so well of him, that he intrusted his two sons to his care, to be “taken to Europe,”—that is, to Great Britain,—and there “to be fixed at some genteel academy.” Bell had made, in the course of his seven

years' residence, a sum between £800 and £900. On the day of sailing he was lucky enough to catch a sight of the Marquis de la Fayette and his family, who, he says, "had just arrived at York to command the army destined to storm Portsmouth, where was General Arnold." He passed the English and French fleets, who were just preparing to engage. His voyage was miserable and unfortunate in every way; and before it was over he suffered shipwreck. The ship ran aground—was filling with water, when at daybreak all of the passengers and crew managed to effect their escape to land. It was still winter; the ground was covered with snow; the country (in lat. 45°) was uninhabited; the shipwrecked party had to sleep in tents; they were all wet to the skin night and day; and things looked so depressing, that Bell thought it best to make his will. He leaves 25,634 pounds of tobacco, and £10 sterling, which Mr Braxton owes him, to his father, Bailie Bell. To make things worse, sixteen of the crew — *sexdecim sceleratissimi*, says Bell—agree to rob and plunder the passengers, and then to desert them. At last, however, Bell and his friends get away in a boat and reach Halifax, where they are well content—in spite of the fact that beef is "9d. sterling per pound," and a turkey costs twenty-one shillings. At length, on the 10th of May, Bell and his pupils sail in the *Adamant* for London, and reach Gravesend on the 6th of June.

## CHAPTER III.

LONDON—ST ANDREWS—AND LEITH.

ANDREW Bell brought his pupils to London, and they took lodgings in New Bond Street. What was then called "quality" seems to have been their chief end in life. Their eldest brother had had a run of eighteen months on the Continent, and had, says Bell, "returned quite the man of fashion, possessed of the graces." This fashion, and these graces, were destined to give Bell a good deal of trouble. What with the "unremitting kindness," as regards money, of Mr Braxton, the idleness and disobedience of the lads, Mr Bell was at length obliged to give up the work, and to send in his resignation to their guardians.

Turning his back upon London, he set his face towards Scotland. He travelled sometimes on horse-back, sometimes on foot, sometimes by stage, and sometimes by a local waggon. He seems to have kept a journal of what he saw and heard,—fragments of which still exist. Among other things, he mentions that at Grantham he "supped at the Angel with an Israelite;" that in the county of Durham he found "monstrous conversation, but savouring of Scottish, as in York-

shire ;" that he is always dropping things on the road — "on the first day my penknife, on the second a handkerchief, on the third a nightcap, and on the fourth my glass ;" that, when he arrived in Scotland, some parts of some of the towns did not smell agreeably ; and that at Fallowden, he got good green tea at breakfast, which cost sixpence ; while "at Greenlaw it was eightpence." At length he reached Edinburgh. He sent his cards round to his friends ; and in the hyperbolic language of the period, Mr and Mrs Peter returned "their most affectionate and friendly compliments to their much esteemed Mr A. Bell," and were "incapable of expressing their delight" that he was in their neighbourhood again. After two days in Edinburgh, he "arrived in the dark at St Andrews, and was not known by mamma" (his mother).

His new stay at St Andrews was not unchecked by events. A quarrel arose between himself and a Mr Crookenden, an English student at the University. A challenge followed. The combatants met on the Witch Hill, a rising ground which looks over the broad bay, away to a long stretch of sands, a breadth of moorland, and on to the lovely hills of Forfarshire ; and all preliminaries had been duly arranged. Mr Bell was shortsighted, and at the same time very eager, and when the signal was given, he poured his fire into the seconds. A burst of laughter followed. The seconds took advantage of the good-humour to bring about a reconciliation, and a pleasant dinner followed.

Mr Bell thought as highly of a good dinner as Dr Johnson. He stayed during Christmas with his father's

friend, Mr Dempster of Dunnichen, and records in his diary how he ate of an "eel three feet long, and nine inches round;" and that the "daily fare is grouse, roast-beef, giblets, tripe, soup, oysters, etc., etc.; strong beer by Hunter, twenty-two years old, most excellent. Three wines—bravo!"

Soon after this his two American pupils were sent down to St Andrews by order of their father. Here Mr Bell could take a firm hold of them; and he entered them at the United College, made them rise at five, and forced them to work hard at languages and sciences. He himself rose at four. In July 1783, the tutor and his pupils were attacked with an endemic sore throat, which had been travelling all over Europe. Bell was much the worst; but he was tenderly nursed by his friend Mr Berkeley (afterwards a prebendary of Canterbury), a son of the great Bishop Berkeley. For three days Bell was unable to swallow anything; but, says Mr Berkeley, "under God, a poached egg saved Bell's life."

The young men did very well at college. One of them gained a prize for an essay on the "Immortality of the Soul," a subject which, owing to its complete freedom from data and exemption from the ordinary rules of argument and methods of inquiry, is a standing favourite with Scottish students.

The father did not write much, and sent money still seldomer. Mr Bell, who had only a salary of £40 a year—paid uncertainly—had to write often and again: "It is scarcely possible for me to express my astonishment at your silence." He goes on to say that he is

employed "day and night in the service of your sons ;" that he "takes from his usual hours of rest," and yet his fees are "not anything like the usual reward of mere boys who are employed as tutors." Besides, Mr Bell has to be "every hour in the day with them," to prevent their extravagance from ruining them. The boys kept a "servant out of livery," but Mr Bell himself was not paid.

Bell now began to take mathematical pupils. His first pupil was a nephew of Mrs Dempster's; but "the young man, going into the county of Angus, was put into a damp bed," and died of rheumatic fever. He, however, succeeded in at length collecting eight pupils; but the receipts were not satisfactory. He now thought of returning to Virginia, and wrote to Mr Braxton: "What prospects may I indulge"—this was the epistolary manner of the period—"from a revisitation to Virginia? Any academies erected? Any encouragement in the line of the Church? Shall I come out in holy orders? What is now the mode of obtaining them in America? Can they be come at with you?" He was willing to do anything; but "the line of the Church" and holy orders that are "to be come at" strike one as a reminiscence of the days of currency and tobacco.

An event now occurred which turned the whole stream of his existence. A general election was at hand. The St Andrews burghs had to return a member to Parliament; and the constituency consisted entirely of the town-councillors of the burghs.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Unlike the Spartan virtue of these modern days, the town-



rival candidates were Mr Dempster of Dunnichen and a Mr Campbell, of the family of Breadalbane. Every engine of private and secret persuasion was put in motion; every kind of human weakness was appealed to; and most of the voters had been got at through their pockets. All the town-councillors had pledged themselves to the one or to the other candidate with one exception; and it so happened that an exactly equal number had pledged themselves on both sides. The councillor who had refused to give any promise was Bailie Bell. With him virtually lay the whole power of electing. He was approached in every possible way; and at length the Breadalbane candidate went so far as to offer him £500 for his vote—a large sum in those days. The honest bailie sternly declined, and gave his vote for Mr Dempster. The new member was profuse in his thanks, and promised to take a fatherly interest in his son.

Bell now resolved to enter the Church of England. By the aid of his friend Berkeley he obtained an introduction to Dr Porteus, the Bishop of Chester, by whom he was ordained. Soon after this, a vacancy occurred in the Episcopal Chapel at Leith. Bell went there to preach; the congregation was satisfied; and he was engaged at a salary of fifty guineas a-year to act as curate. This salary was afterwards raised to £70.

Not long after this appointment, he was offered a situation as tutor to a son of Lord Conyngham, who was intended for Parliament or for diplomacy. He was councillors were not impervious to argument, if conveyed in a manner sufficiently weighty.

not only to teach the usual subjects, but also to direct the political studies of the lad ; and on this occasion Mr Dempster wrote to him that “ the old proverb, *Honesty is the best policy*, is worth Montesquieu, Bolingbroke, and De Lolme, all put together.” There is always a populous school of “ political thinkers ” who deal largely in general statements and major premises ; but they are not very happy or helpful in fitting everyday circumstances and actual cases to their wide and loose maxims. Honesty is not only the best policy, it is the necessary condition of the most moderate success. This agreement with Lord Conyngham was, however, never carried out ; and Mr Dempster now urged Bell to go to India, to lecture there on natural philosophy, and to do work “ in the way of tuition.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## INDIA.

ANDREW BELL, now Dr Bell (his University, with thoughtful generosity, had given him an M.D.), sailed from the Downs for India on the 21st of February 1787 with £128, 10s. in his pocket; and on the 2d of June his ship reached Madras. His destination was Calcutta; but the committee for establishing a Military Male Orphan Asylum at Madras, believing they saw in Dr Bell "a person eminently qualified to superintend the education of children," asked him to stay in that city, and he accordingly cut short his journey.

Here promotion and appointments flowed in upon him all at once. Between August and October of that year he obtained one chaplainship to a regiment and three deputy-chaplainships—all offices with little work but certain pay; and he began also to give courses of lectures, which were very successful. Those were the days in India of the pagoda tree; and his first course of lectures brought him in the sum of 972 pagodas, or £360. The lectures even became the rage with the ladies of the town; and one correspondent writes that "the ladies are determined to encounter every incon-

venience for fashion's sake." He redelivered his lectures in Calcutta, and there too with great success. Meanwhile another deputy-chaplainship came in, "being the fifth appointment conferred upon him in little more than a year and a half." Mr Southey goes on to point out, that "at this time Dr Bell partook largely of the blessings of pluralism. Besides five deputy-chaplainships, he held two full chaplainships; and he was also superintendent of undertakers;" and the poet compares him to "Kehama, who was in eight places at once." Most of these offices were sinecures, but all had salaries attached to them; and the same absorbing genius which had combined teaching with dealings in tobacco and American currency, was here to push its fortune in every possible or likely direction.

In 1789 he heard from St Andrews the news of his father's death—"the death," he says, "of as good a father, and as just and upright a man, as ever lived."

The unpaid American tobacco began now to trouble him. He wanted to provide for his orphaned sisters, and it was advisable to look up every resource in his power. He wrote to Mr Braxton and other friends the most earnest letters, pointing out "the many sacrifices made of everything dear and valuable,—of youth, health, and fortune," to his pupils; but no answer ever came from any one. The fact is, the Braxtons had been ruined by the Revolution; all their property in Virginia was lost, and Bell's along with it. In spite of this, his success in India was so rapid and so great that he soon felt himself able to settle an annual allowance upon his only unmarried sister. As "the chaplain was the per-

son by whom funerals were furnished, and the undertaker was his functionary," the death of Europeans in Madras was a source of considerable gain to him. He had an allowance of one pagoda "on every scarf-funeral of twelve scarves, two of twenty, and three of fifty,"—whatever a scarf-funeral may mean. But these are mysteries, known only to undertakers. Dr Bell, however, very soon, says Southey, "gave up this branch of business."

He went on with his lectures, which were always successful. He showed original power, too, in natural philosophy, and was the first man who ever made ice in India, as well as the first to make and float a balloon.

The Orphan Asylum in Madras now began to take visible form and existence. A deserted fort, called Egmore Redoubt, in an open and healthy situation, was selected for the purposes of the Asylum, and fitted up for the reception of the children. Dr Bell, whose heart was in this work, declined to receive any salary as superintendent, though the duties of this office were much heavier than those of all his chaplainships put together. The Asylum was supported not only by voluntary subscriptions, but also by the fines imposed for drunkenness in the army. The boys—known as "blue boys"—were the sons chiefly of European fathers and Indian mothers; and they were to be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They were not allowed to have any intercourse with their "maternal relations." All seemed to be going well, except that the teachers in the Asylum had no knowledge of their duties, and no very great love for them; and to add to Dr Bell's diffi-

culties, as soon as an assistant had grown qualified for his work in school, he very soon discovered that he had also become qualified for situations where the salary was much higher and the work far less irksome. Dr Bell's temper was quick and even rampant; and in all his attempts to introduce improvements, he was met by the silent unsympathy, or by the quiet opposition, of every one of the masters. He was much discouraged.

One morning, in the course of his early ride along the surf-beaten shore of Madras, he happened to pass a Malabar school, which, as was usual with Indian schools, was held in the open air. He saw the little children writing with their fingers on sand,<sup>1</sup> which, after the fashion of such schools, had been strewn before them for that purpose. He turned his horse, galloped home, shouting, "Heureka! Heureka!" and now believed that he at length saw his way straight before him. He at once gave orders to the usher of the lowest classes to procure a board and some fine sand, and to teach the alphabet to the youngest children with this apparatus. The usher declared it was impossible. Here was a dead wall; but Dr Bell had as great a contempt for the word "impossible" as Napoleon himself. A difficulty with him was simply a call for new resource; an impossibility was a sign that he was just about to break into a rich vein of ore. The despair of the usher—the "impossibility" of his task, in fact—was the means of driving Dr Bell upon what he called his "great discovery" in education. Finding that nothing was to be expected from any of his assist-

<sup>1</sup> See John viii. 6.

ants, he resolved to employ a little boy to carry out his plans. He had long noticed a bright little fellow called Johnnie Frisken, the son of a private soldier; and it is this little boy who is the corner-stone of a "system" which seemed at one time destined to educate the children of the three kingdoms. Little Frisken carried out with the greatest ease the impossibility that had been too much for the powers of the usher. Other boys were soon selected: and very soon John Frisken was appointed superintendent of these monitors and their classes—superintendent, in fact, of the lower part of the school. "His little friends" were both eager and faithful; and they were amply rewarded by a smile from the Doctor, or sufficiently punished by a frown from his bushy black eyebrows. The plan of making one boy teach others gradually spread throughout the school: and the result was progress, contentment, and happiness. Gradually the whole of the teaching work fell into the hands of the boys; and, so far as instruction went, the master and his assistants were practically superseded. Every boy was either a master or a scholar, and "generally both;" and the utmost harmony reigned among the white and the blue boys. The blue boys learned to be straightforward, and to give up the tricks and wiles which they had acquired from their native mothers; and Dr Bell conceived the large ambition "to alter the character of a race of men."

Dr Bell now started an orderly book, and, most characteristically, the first entry made in it "conveyed a reprimand to the schoolmaster." Mr Harvey was

desired to pay more attention ; and Mr Harvey did not like it. Every usher, in every part of his work, was admonished in a similar manner. The ushers did not relish it any more than the head-master. One usher was particularly vicious. He bit the fingers and pinched the ears of the little boys : and another had even dared to speak rudely to Dr Bell in the presence of the boys themselves.

At length the head-master resigned. He gave as his reason that he found himself incapable of executing the duties, or supporting the fatigues, of his office of school-master. "What duties do you speak of?" "Almost every duty," was the reply. "What fatigues?" continued Dr Bell. "The fatigues of the mind." His resignation was accepted. Frisken was now eleven years of age, and had a third of the whole school under his care.

It was not easy to fill Mr Harvey's place. There was no great choice of teachers in Madras. Mr Holmes, a clerk in the Adjutant-General's Office, applied for it ; and in his letter of application to Dr Bell, mentions that he had heard "that you was a very odd kind of a gentleman, and very fond of abusing and quarrelling with the teachers, when they were not even in the least fault imaginable." Dr Bell turned his eye upon another candidate, the Rev. Charles William Piezold, from the University of Wittenberg. But Mr Piezold was just as *naïf* as Mr Holmes. His wife stood in the way. He writes to Dr Bell that, as "a man of family, he must absolutely accommodate himself to the humours and dispositions of Mrs Piezold, to her liking and disliking,



pleasing and not pleasing ;” and he goes on to say that he “ showed Dr Bell yesterday the most perspicuous marks of my being entirely incapable to succeed in the room of Mr Harvey.” “ You see, dear sir, this is sincerity, this is open-heartedness.”

But now at length Dr Bell, whose health, owing to worry and the climate, was not so good, began to think of returning to Europe. The climate, the dryness and clearness of which he at first enjoyed, began to affect his health in 1794. He had been very happy in India ; and he had rendered his “ system ” complete in all its details. Mr Dempster writes to him to “ bring back a good constitution and £10,000 ;” and, tiring of the eternal fine weather and the sultry sun, his thoughts turned to the cooler air, the more varied climate, and the clouds and mists of his native country. He felt, too, that he had made his mark in India. “ I think,” he says, “ I have made great progress in a very difficult attempt, and almost wrought a complete change in the morals and character of a generation of boys.” This was much. But his health would not permit him to remain ; and he wrote to a friend to find him a landed estate, “ the purchase of which would bring him in two or three hundred pounds a-year.”

## CHAPTER V.

## HOME AGAIN.

DR BELL left India on the 20th of August 1796, followed by the praises, the regards, and the regrets of everybody who knew him; and he had, in addition, £25,935, 16s. 5d. in his pocket. In his head he carried a new idea which he thought was destined to change the face of English society, to mould the rising generation, to raise the Church to new and greater heights of power, and to promote the interests of the whole nation. On his voyage home his ship called at the Cape, and Dr Bell climbed Table Mountain, admired "the moss over the table, soft and moist as a sponge," and visited Constantia, where he found in the Calvinistic chapel "the candlestick and the sand-glass, like a Presbyterian Church." The sand-glass is forgotten, and its use has utterly perished. He called at St Helena, too, and "ate conger-eels at the Governor's garden—a rich fish." On the 28th of December he "took up a bucket of water and found it highly luminous when agitated; saw distinctly the fiery particles, and poured them on the deck, where they shone for some time as well as in your hand." He arrived in London on the 7th of February

1797, after a voyage of nearly six months. We can go round the world now in three.

✓ "Never was I so charmed with an English spring," he writes to his friend General Floyd: "Scotland has no spring, and the daughters of the spring are so enchanting." He goes on to say that he fears his susceptibility to beauty is not so quick as it once was. The English world was now his oyster, and the sword with which he was about to open it was his "Report on the Madras Asylum." This Report he made up his mind to publish under the title of 'An Experiment in Education, made at the Male Asylum at Madras, suggesting a System by which a School or Family may Teach itself under the Superintendence of the Master or Parent.

This Report was, in his belief, to be the seed of a slow-growing and mighty tree, from which generation after generation was to be fed, and under which they were to find shelter and shade; and Dr Bell hoped that "by the end of next century it would be generally practised in Europe." In one of his letters to the printer, he says, "You will mark me for an enthusiast; but if you and I live a thousand years, we shall see this system of education spread over the world." In the meantime, however, his "humble essay" is "not to be advertised in the London newspapers oftener than thrice in all;" and these three advertisements were to be distributed over the 'Times,' the 'Sun,' and the 'Star' newspapers, the two latter of which have been long sunk in endless night. He sent copies of his Report to the most influential persons in the kingdom—dukes,

archbishops, bishops, and a large number of other peers.

Meanwhile he bought some land in Dumfriesshire, which brought him in a rental of £610 a-year.

His plans very soon began to make way in London. A Mr Watts, one of the trustees of St Botolph's, Aldgate, "the oldest Protestant parochial school in London," handed the Report to Samuel Nichols (the Mr in the case of teachers was always omitted at that period) the head-master, who reported to the trustees that the *System* "instructs the younger ones with more rapidity, because to the monitor they can read and spell twice or thrice in the morning and afternoon, when to the master not more than once." This was a beginning. The plan was accordingly adopted in this school in 1798; and in 1803 Mr Nichols writes to Mr Watts in praise of another "idea" of Dr Bell's—the use of sand. He says: "The sand I continue to use, it being the most facilitating as well as the most saving method that ever was conceived." And he gives as an instance of its efficacy the following case: "I had a boy, who is the dullest, heaviest, and the least inclined to learning I ever had, who, having for six months past wrote upon sand, and read alternately and constantly while at school, is now able not only to spell every word, but can tell me many words, let me ask him where I will; and he appears now to have an inclination to learning, to which, when he first came, he had an utter aversion." The value of this as an educational fact clearly lies in this: that whereas the boy had before this time been called upon merely to imitate another person by threats and by

coercion, his self-activity was now agreeably roused into ✓ free play, and the movements of his mind and finger were accompanied by their natural modicum of pleasure. The little boy, in shorter words, *liked* "writing with a pen upon damp sand."

The System travelled down to Kendal, and was taken up with enthusiasm by Dr Briggs, the mayor of the town. He started a school on the Madras System, and most thoughtfully attached to it "a penny ordinary." "The experiment of giving the children occasional lessons in geography was also made here, a set of maps having been presented to the school; and with admirable results." Nearly eighty years after, the present writer has found schools, both in London and Glasgow, where lessons in geography were given, but where a map was never either shown or seen.

Dr Bell spent the winter of 1798-99 with his sister at Dumfries, so as to be near his lately acquired purchases. He seems to have mixed a good deal in the society of the place, and, "towards the end of his sojourn there, to have kept a carriage and horses, together with a coachman and footman." In August of 1799 he went to Edinburgh, and officiated at the English Episcopal Chapel there—services which the congregation rewarded with a quantity of plate.

His friends now began to think that Dr Bell had some intention of marrying. And Mr Dempster wrote him, that "it is the general opinion of all my female friends, that you could only hire so dear a house, and keep a carriage, with a view to fascinate some coy damsel." Major Wight, another friend, wrote to

warn him against what he calls "learned ladies." "They are" in Major Wight's opinion, "most generally deficient in that delicacy and correctness which render a woman most truly amiable." These speculations and suggestions were, however, soon brought to a close by Dr Bell's marrying a Miss Agnes Barclay, the daughter of the minister of Middleton. The same ponderous and infallible Major Wight thus describes, in the epistolary manner of the period, the new condition of Dr Bell: "You are now placed in your native country, in the midst of your friends, in unembarrassed affluence, and married to the wife of your choice, aided by science, and by an ample acquaintance with practical matters."

Dr Bell married at the not immature age of forty-seven.

## CHAPTER VI.

## DR BELL AS A COUNTRY PARSON.

IN the year 1801, Dr Bell was presented to the Rectory of Swanage in Dorsetshire—a living of more than £600 a-year. The parish was a very small one. It contained about three hundred families; and there were three Roman Catholics and twenty Methodists within its bounds. They were a quiet, simple, primitive, kindly people. Among the more notable inhabitants was Thomas Maxwell, a retired quarryman, a great student of books, and the founder of a musical society in the place. He was the author of several books—one on mathematical geography; and his tombstone states that he “broke through the barrier to literature, and acquired a degree of knowledge which might have ranked him with the first philosophers of the age.” The reason, given farther on, why he was not in the first rank of philosophers, is that he was a “child of solitude.” He is thus to be classed with those village Hampdens, mute inglorious Miltons, and others whom an unkind fate or “the force of circumstances” has prevented from doing very much either for mankind or for themselves.

Another noteworthy family consisted also of quarry-

men. They were called Stickland; and several members of this family were employed as teachers in the Sunday-school "under the new system." The salary for each of the two teachers in the Sunday-school was only fifteen shillings a-year; this was afterwards raised to twenty-six shillings: but in the course of time the subscriptions to the schools fell away entirely. In spite of the complete disappearance of his salary, John Stickland stuck to his post, and was not to be discouraged. He even provided the children with books at his own expense; and he instructed them in sacred music. Dr Bell became a constant visitor at the Sunday-school, and was in the habit of going from class to class, asking questions, throwing in hints, explaining passages, and in general making himself an element of stir and revolution. The children looked a great deal more at the burly eager black-browed Scotchman than at their books; and Mr Stickland had now and then to request the doctor to "be pleased to pitch himself." In 1802, Dr Bell introduced his System; and his energetic efforts to make the little scholars understand and appropriate every even the minutest detail, are still a memory in the parish. "He hammered it into them," Mr Stickland used to say, "like a blacksmith on an anvil."

Education, under the enthusiastic fostering of Bell, spread in the parish, until there were no fewer than thirteen day-schools in it, and three Sunday-schools. The introduction of his plans into one of the disorderly local schools was, he says, "like magic; order and regularity started up all at once. In half an hour more was



learned, and far better, than had been done the whole day before. A class which could only get one line to a lesson a fortnight ago, now gets eight: and all say their lessons well, and come on in like proportion. . . . They quit the school at dismissal with reluctance; and they return before their time to renew the competition."

But, while a bright day seemed to be rising for the new system, there were clouds and tempests in Dr Bell's life which were destroying his domestic peace. Nothing is known of the nature of these "unhappy dissensions." No paper exists to lead or to mislead us on the subject. We do not know whether Dr Bell or his wife were "in fault," who was most to blame, or whether a fundamental incompatibility of disposition prevented all chance of a kindly arrangement. A youthful bridegroom of forty-seven, who has had it all his own way in India for twenty years, was not very likely to alter his habits, or to tone down his somewhat combustible disposition, after he had passed the age of fifty. The two separated finally in April 1806, before they had been married six years. History—this and others—knows nothing of Agnes Barclay, her looks, her ways, her character, her hopes, her fears, or her aims—nothing at all except her name. And so Mrs Bell disappears entirely from the scene without leaving behind her a single trace of her existence.<sup>1</sup>


<sup>1</sup> De Quincey appends the following note to his essay on S. T. Coleridge: "Most men have their enemies and calumniators; Dr Bell had *his*, who happened, rather indecorously, to be his wife—from whom he was legally separated, or (as in Scotch law it is

In addition to being an innovator in education, Dr Bell was a vigorous revolutionary in other matters. He did not reserve his pulpit for vague shadowy state-

called) *divorced*; not, of course, divorced *à vinculo matrimonii* which only amounts to a divorce in the English sense (such a divorce as enables the parties to contract another marriage), but simply divorced *à mensâ et thoro*. This legal separation, however, did not prevent the lady from persecuting the unhappy Doctor with everlasting letters, indorsed outside with records of her enmity and spite. Sometimes she addressed her epistles thus: 'To that supreme of rogues, who looks like the hangdog that he is, Doctor (such a doctor!) Andrew Bell.' Or, again: 'To the ape of apes, and the knave of knaves, who is recorded to have once paid a debt, but a small one you may be sure it was that he selected for this wonderful experiment—in fact, it was 4½d. Had it been on the other side of 6d. he must have died before he could have achieved so dreadful a sacrifice.' Many others, most ingeniously varied in the style of abuse, I have heard rehearsed by Coleridge, Southey, Lloyd, &c.; and one, in particular, addressed to the Doctor, when spending a summer in the cottage of Robert Newton, an old soldier, in Grasmere, presented on the back two separate adjurations, one specially addressed to Robert himself, pathetically urging him to look sharply after the rent of his lodgings; and the other more generally addressed to the unfortunate person as yet undisclosed to the British public (and in this case turning out to be myself), who might be incautious enough to pay the postage at Ambleside. 'Don't grant him an hour's credit,' she urged upon the person unknown, 'if I had any regard to my family.' '*Cash down!*' she wrote twice over. Why the Doctor submitted to these annoyances, nobody knew. Some said it was mere indolence; but others held it to be a cunning compromise with her inexorable malice. The letters were certainly open to the 'public' eye; but meantime the 'public' was a very narrow one; the clerks in the post-office had little time for digesting such amenities of conjugal affection; and the chance bearer of the letters to the Doctor would naturally solve the mystery by supposing an *extra* portion of madness in the writer, rather than an *extra* portion of knavery in the reverend receiver."

ments of abstract doctrines, but attacked Satan wherever he found him, and with most vigour and success in his fleshly strongholds; and on the 15th of June 1806, "preached twice, and the same sermon, both forenoon and afternoon, on cow-pock." But he not merely preached, he vaccinated everybody, "from seventy-eight years of age to twelve months;" and he set every body vaccinating, his own wife (before she left him), old women, and schoolmistresses, in all the parishes round about: and so thorough and successful was his treatment, that there was not a single instance of any of his patients being attacked by small-pox, which was at that time a periodical epidemic of the most fatal nature in every part of Great Britain. It appears that, as there were poets before Homer, and novelists before Cervantes, there was also a vaccinator before Dr Jenner. This was Benjamin Jesty, of Downshay, near Swanage. He lived to be seventy-nine, and was, says his veracious tombstone, "particularly noted for having been the first person (known) who introduced the cow-pox by inoculation, and who, from his great strength of mind, made the experiment from the cow on his wife and two sons, in the year 1774." The historic tombstone is silent as to whether his great strength of mind induced him to try the experiment upon himself.

Dr Bell also introduced the manufacture of straw-plait into Swanage. This was at best a doubtful advantage. The persons who purchased the straw-plait did not pay the workers in money, but in truck,—thus earning a profit at both ends. The health of the work-



ers was impaired by long sitting ; and as soft delicate hands were necessary, they were not allowed to do any household work.

In fact, Dr Bell did everything he could. There was no limit to his energy and versatility. Benefit societies, schools, friendly meetings, clubs, visiting from house to house, advising with farmers,—nothing came amiss to him ; his large, fiery, friendly nature had an infection in it which few could resist. He was hospitable to the extent of keeping open house ; and under his influence the social spirit flowed and spread like a strong tide all over the neighbourhood.

## CHAPTER VII.

ANDREW BELL AND JOSEPH LANCASTER.

THESE are the *dioscuri* of modern popular education. Like other great and small "discoverers," they hated each other with a perfect hatred; they accused each other of stealing each other's "ideas;" they did their utmost to fence in the sky for the benefit of their own separate and separating "Churches;" and they taught their followers to cultivate a mutual detestation, which has no parallel outside of science or theology. Soldiers, who have to make war on other nations, frequently form the most lasting friendships among the men they take prisoner; but to men engaged in the war of words, there is no custom of capture, and little opportunity of turning hatred into affection. How many wakeful nights has this unchristian spirit cost the present biographer! Bell and Lancaster were as jealous of each other as two women in love with the same man; and even the common love of children and education could not bring them into one mind. Must human affairs always progress by the method of antagonism—"madman or slave, must man be one?" George the Third, in an interview with Lancaster, said to him: "It is my will that every child in my king-

dom should be able to read the Bible." The wish never went an inch beyond the expression; the words remained mere words; no step was taken to carry the royal will into the cottages of the poor. Here were two seemingly heaven-sent men who could have done it; but instead of doing it, they set to work and quarrelled. They were men eager to label their names across the education of the people, and to turn their *systems* into banners for the marshalling of hostile camps. They were also both Christians, followers of the eternal Peace-maker, of the Divine Son, who asked His Father to forgive the very men who were nailing Him to the cross. But religion is too good for everyday concerns; it must not be mixed up with the secular—it must be kept exclusively for Sunday wear. It lends itself beautifully to hymns and prayers, and is not out of place in compositions called "sermons;" but it is a foreign leaven in everyday intercourse between man and man—between Lancaster and Bell,—*that* must be regulated, like other pieces of business, by the multiplication-table. Thus, and thus only, is "civilisation" to be advanced. Besides, if religion is good, it is good chiefly for others.

Joseph Lancaster had a message; and his story of it is not without pathos. "I was walking," he says, "from Deptford to Greenwich, when my attention was attracted by this inscription: 'To the glory of God, and to the benefit of poor children;' and while I was pleasantly meditating upon the founder giving glory to God, the children burst forth into singing His praises. My heart was melted; and it pleased God to implant within me a fervent wish and desire that I might one day thus

honour Him; and through all the vicissitudes of the intervening period, my hope was seldom long clouded. I knew not how it was to be accomplished; but, being assured that it was a divine impression, my mind was constantly endeavouring to find out a way. In 1798 I proposed something of this kind to a number of gentlemen, but it failed. I had not long entered into the straw-hat business; but I was persuaded this was the channel to accomplish my wish."

Here, surely, in the dearest time of England's religious feeling, was a manifestation, in the dull streets of Deptford, of the divine. Lancaster, at the age of eighteen, opened a school in his father's house; and not long after he happened to possess himself of a copy of Dr Bell's celebrated Report. In the year 1804, he wrote to Dr Bell from the "Free School, Borough Road," on the "21st of 11th month," enumerating his difficulties, and asking for advice. He mentions, as one of the "obstacles to the diffusion" of popular education, "the price of sand in London—9s. the load;" and he asks for "further information on the use of the sand,—whether dry or wet, and how the boys were first taught their letters." Lancaster further offers to travel down and talk with Dr Bell. The meeting between these two celebrated personages took place in 1805.

Dr Bell's account of their meeting is full of prejudice. His feelings were, no doubt, much influenced by Church considerations; and as he was writing to Mrs Trimmer—a buttress, if not a pillar, of the Church—he was more likely to show these feelings and their influences with perfect openness. He says that Lancaster

"seemed disposed to copy him on every point," except on that of the training of teachers. And the good Doctor, with his eager practical mind, is filled with scorn at the notions of Lancaster upon this subject. Lancaster, with the *naïve* simpleness of an inquiring mind, had expressed his opinion that it was as well for a teacher to know something of the nature and growth of the mind and soul upon which he had to operate. Dr Bell calls this "forming his teachers by lectures on the passions;" and thunders out, "Nothing was ever so burlesque!" And he goes on,—seeing with perfect truth, as far as he does see—"It is by attending the school, seeing what is going on there, and taking a share in the office of tuition, that teachers are to be formed, and not by lectures and abstract instruction." Most true; but "it takes all sorts to make up a world." How to train a teacher is a problem which still remains to be solved; and at the present time there are many good and true minds hard at work upon it. But to put the question upon its lowest ground, it is plain that the teacher, who has intrusted to him a very difficult task, ought to know something, be it more or less, of growing human nature,—of the laws according to which human knowledge is acquired, and of the chief hindrances to the production of strong minds and healthy souls,—just as the carpenter is the better for knowing the grain and fibre of woods, and the farmer for learning the chemical components of soil and manure.

If Dr Bell ever had any kindly feeling for, or sympathy with, Lancaster and his labours, the notable Mrs Trimmer, who—according to her own account—had



"long been engaged in striving to promote the interests of the Church," very soon put all that out of his head. She made two great discoveries: one, that Lancaster was "building on the foundation of Dr Bell;" and the other, that "there was something in his plan that was inimical to the interests of the Established Church." Here was the ecclesiastical trumpet clearly blown. Dr Bell would have been unfaithful to his Church had he forborne to treat and to describe Mr Lancaster as an impostor and a plagiarist. And so the armoury of evil names is ransacked. "Quackery, conceit, ignorance, a consummate front" (whatever that may mean), a "plausible and ostentatious guise"—these and many other accusations are thrown vigorously about. In the case of Dr Bell, all this only meant that he was jealous of Lancaster, and looked upon him as a kind of poacher. But Mrs Trimmer saw farther. She saw that Lancaster was an incendiary and a conspirator. "Of all the plans," she says in one of her letters to Dr Bell, "that have appeared in this kingdom likely to supplant the Church, Mr Lancaster's seem to me the most formidable." And she mixes him up with Jacobins, Illuminati, *Philanthropinists*, sectarists, and infidels, and is determined to erase him and his works from the face of England. Here is a quiet straw-plaiting Quaker, who tries to teach large numbers of poor children, and he is spoken of as a kind of spiritual and diabolic Guy Fawkes. Joseph Lancaster, on the other hand, wrote nothing in reply, but quietly said to his neighbour Friends, "Sarah Trimmer is a bigot; and having set up to herself that golden image, the Church, she wants

every knee to bow down to it." But Mrs Trimmer will not let Lancaster alone even in his private life. "It is a curious fact," she says, "that he was not originally a Quaker, but an Anabaptist, intended by his father (who is a preacher himself) for what they call a *minister*.<sup>1</sup> Whether he changed for the love of a pretty Quaker, whom he married, or whether the *broad brim* was the best cover for his scheme, I cannot say." Had all this taken place at the present day, one would say that Mrs Trimmer was suffering from the *spreti injuria amoris*; but in the early part of this century, all good Churchmen believed that they, and they alone, held the patent for the Christian religion, and this kind of language was employed to deter all persons from interference with their exclusive rights. ✓

Dr Bell is more kind, if at the same time a little too patronising. "In his (Mr Lancaster's) hands this beautiful system has the advantage of being conducted with admirable temper, ingenuity, and ability; and he discovers much contrivance, and even wit, in the ramifications of its application." But in another letter, written at a later date, he describes the simple child-like man as "illiterate and ignorant, with a brazen front, consummate assurance, and the most artful and plausible address, not without ability and ingenuity, heightened in its effects under the Quaker's guise." His family, too, were anything but what they ought to be. "His account of his family in unguarded moments —Dissenters, Roman Catholics, infidels—is most extraordinary." In another letter, Mrs Trimmer flatters

<sup>1</sup> The italics and the scorn are Mrs Trimmer's.

Dr Bell by describing Lancaster's procedure as "a perversion of your excellent plan for purposes deeper than meet the eye." This is one of the very oldest methods of abuse, and one of the most effective. You do not know anything about the intentions of the other man, and you are therefore free to conjecture the very worst. The King was going to help Lancaster; and a school was about to be opened at Windsor on his plan, to be called the *King's School*. But a zealous ally of Mrs Trimmer's, the Rev. Mr Plimley, rector of Windsor, defeated this philanthropic "attempt of the arrogant Quaker." Mrs Trimmer even succeeded in disturbing the repose of the higher orders of the clergy. "The dignitaries of the Church," she says, "even the *highest*, are fully convinced of the danger of the plan of forming the children of the lower orders into *one organised body*."<sup>1</sup> . . . The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge are desirous to take an active part against him. . . . In short, his wings will be clipped in some degree." Such wrath disturbs celestial minds—such passions ruffle the quiet bosoms even of the sage barn-door fowl.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Trimmer's italics.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SYSTEM SPREADS.

THE trustee of a charity school in Whitechapel had fallen in love with the System, and was anxious to have it introduced. Mrs Trimmer was also contemplating a girls' school at Brentford. Accordingly Dr Bell came up to town. In commencing the organisation of the school at Whitechapel, "he first chose about twenty of the best and cleanest boys, and having tried them in reading, etc., he selected ten or twelve of the best of them as teachers and assistants for the different classes. He then selected, by further trials, the two best of them for the first class, and the two next for the second; and so on, till he had five or six sets of teachers." He told all the boys present that he was going to help the scholars to teach themselves, and at the same time he "was also going to seek instruction at their hands." When Dr Bell, soon after, left for Swanage, some obstacles arose; and his excitement and determination rose with the emergency. "*By*—meaning *through and under*—God!" he exclaimed, "the work will go on, and flourish and spread far and near."

Mr Davis, the trustee of the Whitechapel school, was

so well satisfied with what he saw there, that he determined to found and endow a school at Gower's Walk—which should be a *school of industry* as well for instruction in the ordinary subjects. In the school shoemaking was tried, but this did not succeed. Printing was then introduced, and the boys took to it with immense eagerness. They “composed, distributed, and worked off to admiration,” and found the labour “highly amusing.”

Lord Radstock, a great admirer of the System, suggested in 1807 to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, that he should establish a school for two hundred boys at Lambeth; and in the beginning of May, Dr Bell obtained a licence from his bishop “to be absent from his benefice of Swanage for two years.”

The System was introduced into the female orphan asylum at Lambeth; and in 1808 Dr Bell was appointed “perpetual guardian” of the institution, in order that he might have every facility for the carrying out of his plan. He was also invited to remodel the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea. In explaining his System to the Duke of York, then Commander-in-chief, he said that his “teachers and assistant teachers were his sergeants and corporals, his reports their orderly books;” and that it was in the school of the army that he had learned his own lesson.

About this time—the beginning of 1807—Lancaster inserted in the ‘Star’ newspaper an advertisement which produced in Dr Bell’s mind a considerable amount of excitement. In this advertisement, he stated that he had “invented, under the blessing of Divine Providence, a new and mechanical system of education for the use of

schools;" and that, "by this system, paradoxical as it may appear, above one thousand children may be *taught and governed* by one master only. . . . Any boy who can read, can teach arithmetic with the certainty of a mathematician, although he knows nothing about it himself." This claim to teach a subject that the teacher does not himself know is constantly making its appearance; and it is one of the diseases that accompany the low feverish habit of mind which demands a *method*, but cares little for the knowledge which must accompany the method—which looks for a panacea, and overleaps the need for first-hand knowledge. This constantly cropping-up demand impeded for a long time the science of medicine; and it even now impedes, to a large extent, the possible science of education.

Mr Whitbread, the eminent brewer and member of Parliament, was at this time engaged on an attempt to remodel the poor-laws, and to introduce a system of national education. The differences between Dr Bell and Mr Lancaster were submitted to him, and he settled, or appeared to settle, them in an amicable way. He stated that "Dr Bell unquestionably preceded Mr Lancaster, and to him the world is first indebted for one of the most useful discoveries which has ever been submitted to society. . . . Mr Lancaster at the same time asserts that many of the very useful methods practised at his school are exclusively his own." Who knows? Who needs to know? Who cares to know? Lancaster hardly knew himself. But he gave a noble life to popular education, and no doubt he has his reward.

Another school on Dr Bell's system was begun in

East Marylebone in 1807. It opened with three boys, and in a short time numbered two hundred and fifty. The success of this school suggested the formation of a society for the promotion of education and the training of teachers ; but nothing came of this movement till several years after. It was, however, very cheering to Dr Bell to find letters pouring in upon him from all parts of the kingdom—from correspondents who asked to be provided with teachers trained upon the famous Madras System. From Ireland, too, came an application from Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who wanted “some hints on the subject of education.” The art of instruction was at this time very backward in Ireland ; and the ideas of discipline very rudimentary. “The boy who had written the best copy was ordered by the master to pull the other’s hair, and so to do till they arrived at their seats in the school again.”

A petition from the West Indies—from Barbadoes—also came to Dr Bell. It asked for a “well-instructed boy,” to be sent out immediately ; and a young *protégé* of Bell’s, Lewis Warren ” was sent out. The Bishop of London was very enthusiastic about Warren, and wrote of him : “He will make his fortune and immortalise his name. He will be ranked among the greatest benefactors to mankind, and (although it is a bold thing to say) he will be doing as much good in the Atlantic Ocean as Bonaparte is doing mischief on the continent of Europe.” This contrast between oceans and continents, Warrens and Bonapartes, is very pleasing. But Warren very soon withdrew his light from education, and gave it to the more lucrative subject of blacking.

The West India planters were, however, up in arms. They deprecated Dr Bell's introducing education among their negroes. They looked upon education as something akin to small-pox or yellow fever. They ask whether there "is nothing further to be done in Great Britain and Ireland in the instruction and civilisation of the lowest classes, that he must adventure the fruits of his imagination to our side of the Atlantic?" If England is fully educated and civilised, there is Ireland; and a Scotch gentleman, "who is now at the right hand" of the correspondent, suggests that even in Scotland the lower classes are not so highly polished as they might be. The planter goes on to complain that England never thinks of her colonies, except to tax or to educate them; that they are the *corpora vilia* for experiment; and to "entreat the Doctor to contemplate the miseries of St Domingo," and to give up a scheme that would "make him answerable in another world for so wanton and cruel a misapplication of his talents." And the writer concludes by stating that, on the Day of Judgment, Dr Bell would not be able to plead "as a justification for the injury done *us*, the benefits to our *slaves*, who are, I sincerely believe, better off in their present condition than instruction in letters would make them."



## CHAPTER IX.

## DR BELL IN DURHAM.

IN the beginning of the year 1808, Dr Bell was trying to find a living near London, in exchange for his rectory at Swanage, in order that he might be able to give personal aid and superintendence to the schools which were rising up under his system on every side. In one of these applications for an ecclesiastical position, he describes himself as "more than fifty, and a bad life;" and points to "the zeal with which I have devoted myself to the King and Church." The motivation, by aid of "the bad life" and "the King,"—who takes precedence of the Church,—sounds to our modern ears somewhat odd. About this time he became acquainted with the Bishop of Durham, who appointed him one of his chaplains, and presented him with the Mastership of Sherburn Hospital.

A long triangular correspondence, about dilapidations, between the Bishop of Durham, the Bishop of Ely (the late Master), and Dr Bell, followed, with which the present reader need not be detained. The Hospital, which is near Durham, had been founded by Hugh Pudsey, "the joly Byshop of Durham," for sixty-five lepers; and the

original endowment dated from before 1181. The lepers were well treated. Their daily allowance was "a loaf weighing five marks, and a gallon of ale to each, and betwixt every two a mess or commons of flesh three days in the week; and of fish, cheese, or butter on the remaining four; on high festivals, a double mess; and in particular, on the feast of St Cuthbert, in Lent, fresh salmon, if it could be had,—if not, other fresh fish; and on Michaelmas-day four messed on a goose, with fresh fish, flesh, or eggs,"—and so on. The sick leper had fire and candles, and all necessities, till he should get better or die,—*donec melioretur vel moriatur*. In the seventeenth century, maimed seamen and soldiers were substituted for lepers.

Dr Bell wished to hold this office along with his living at Swanage; but this was found to be against the conditions of the Mastership. The bishop accordingly requested Dr Bell to write to his patron, Mr Calcraft, and beg him to present the living to a Mr Gale, the bishop's nominee. Mr Gale was not beloved by Swanage; and this lack of affection was ardently returned. V He writes in the plainest terms to Dr Bell: "My good cousin, you begin yours with saying you hope I am in love with Swanage. I told you the moment I saw it, and even before we arrived at it, my idea of it. You talk of summer. The fault is in winter, as you too well know. You are up to the neck in puddle and mire; and in summer you are smothered with the dust, and roasted in those parts where the houses are, by the burning sun. The very sight of the country gave poor Mr Saunders (the curate) the horrors. . . .

I have told the bishop that, instead of doing me a service, the expense of this place will be the ruin of me; and I am most truly sorry that I was so great a fool as to come to it without having first seen it; and well for me had it been at the bottom of the sea before I ever arrived at it." And yet Mr Gale's living in Yorkshire was only £150 a-year, while the Swanage rectory amounted to £600.

Applications for teachers trained on the Madras System, came in almost daily—from London, Twickenham, Plymouth, and many other places. As early as 1805, Dr Bell had recommended the establishment of a Board of Education for the whole country; and in 1808 he published a 'Sketch of a National Institution for Training up the Children of the Poor in Moral and Religious Principles, and in Habits of Useful Industry.' And this was the beginning of the present National Society, which is still strong and prosperous.

The clergy of the diocese of Durham formed themselves in 1811 into "A Society for the Education of the Children of the Poor, according to the System invented by Dr Bell;" and another society of the same kind was founded in Devonshire by Sir Thomas Acland. The formation of this Devonshire society was much quickened by the expressed intention of Mr Lancaster "to visit this county in October;" by a report that he came "with royal authority;" and by his statement that "he will teach the people of Devonshire a lesson that will surprise them, and such as they have not been used to."

The System had been also adopted in the Preparatory

School of Christ's Hospital at Hertford ; and Mr Davis, on visiting it, tells Dr Bell that "I and my wife were delighted almost to tears. An intelligent, well-disposed, unobtrusive master—able, active, diligent, correct, cheerful teachers—happy boys, all employed—the hum of industry—marked books—registers beautifully kept—reading and ciphering after your own heart,—all bespoke the carefulness and attention which had been paid to the directions given." And their success seems to have fired Dr Bell with the ambition of applying the Madras System to classical education.

In the autumn of 1811, the controversy between the partisans of Bell and Lancaster broke out again, and with increased virulence. Lord Radstock, an admirer of Dr Bell's, sent to the 'Morning Post' an "extraordinary rhapsody," to which he gave the title of "The Sleepers Awakened : a Vision." In this paper, the writer dreams that he saw "the whole bench of bishops dressed in their robes, their mitres on their heads, and all of them seemingly in a most profound sleep." Then there appeared "a chubby-faced little man, in an entire drab-coloured suit and a broad-brimmed hat," who "exclaimed in a slow and sonorous tone of voice—'Ye slothful and mouldering puny dignitaries, have ye not slumbered your fill?'" The bishops were frightened ; and "the whole of them rushed out of the hall together, in no less apparent agony than with precipitation." The chubby-faced little man had "dashed a scroll to the floor," and on the scroll was written "*Joseph Lancaster, the inventor of the Lancastrian System.*" Then Lord Radstock, feeling "a gentle tap on the shoulder,"

turned and saw "a lovely youth standing by my side, clad in white, and of heavenly mien." (The lovely youth was Dr Bell, who had a heavy, fleshy, fiery-red face,—was fifty-eight, and, as he himself said, "a bad life.") The youth "spoke as follows: 'Be of good cheer, thou friend to the Established Church, and fear not.'" The editor of the 'Morning Post' appended the following note to the end of the paper: "The above subject being of considerable importance to the public, it is scarcely necessary for us to state that we shall leave our columns open to the free and liberal discussion of it."

The lists were now ready, and the challenge had been sounded. Mr Lancaster at once thought it necessary to address a series of letters to the "British Public," in which he changed his attitude, became the attacking party, drew his sword, and threw away the scabbard. It was a pity. For whereas Lancaster had before thought only of his children, his work, and the wants of the country, he now descended into an arena of personalities, where the line of another man's consciousness is constantly crossed, and where motives and meannesses are lavishly and loudly imputed. He said that the King had sent for him; "unsolicited and unexpectedly," had honoured him with his name and patronage; and that then, and only then, "Dr Bell was dragged out of his retirement to claim a plan, the merit of which I assert is not his." He accuses the reverend Doctor of having for years kept "the benefit of his boasted system" even from the children of his own parish; and adds that, had it not been "for the glitter

and sound of the royal patronage," he would never have left his solitude or his occupation "of planting cabbages." He taunts Dr Bell with being an advocate for "the universal limitation of knowledge," and quotes from one of Dr Bell's pamphlets the fatal words—"The children of the poor should not even be taught to write or to cipher." Professor Marsh, who had the misfortune to preach a sermon in St Paul's to seven thousand charity children, in which he attacked Lancaster, joined in the controversy. The controversy quickly rose into higher regions; and, as was to be expected, the 'Edinburgh Review' took the side of Mr Lancaster, while Southey in the 'Quarterly' appeared as an ally of Dr Bell.

## CHAPTER X.

## PROGRESS.

THE friends of Dr Bell and the Madras System were desirous of establishing a "National Institution" which should extend the benefits of the new ideas to all parts of the three kingdoms. They were also bent upon establishing—what was a very minor matter, about which not a soul cares a straw nowadays—"the priority of Dr Bell's claim." One of the very first discussions which arose at the preliminary meetings was, whether it was advisable to convert the present schoolmasters to Dr Bell's ideas, or to create a new set of teachers by founding a seminary for training them. A third course suggested was "to have one school in perfect order in the metropolis, where masters may be trained, and to which they may be referred." In the course of time, it was resolved to found a society, "to be called the Metropolitan Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, according to the System invented and practised by the Rev. Dr Bell." Part of the plan of the society was also "to show the danger of Lancaster's proceedings."

But Mr Bouger, one of the most powerful prota-

gonists in this movement, had a larger plan in his head. His plan was "to establish not a metropolitan, but a national, society, for the education of the poor." Everybody that was anybody was ready to give his support to either plan. "The Prince Regent approves; that wisest and best of men, Mr Perceval, will give it his best support" (Mr Perceval was the unhappy Prime Minister of the day); and these ceremonial and official heads of the State were followed by a crowd of peers and bishops. But the movement was in some danger. The new society got mixed up with a "Bartlett's Boys' Society," and several of its best supporters refused to join it under this restriction. At length the ship was fairly afloat: and the name was by general consent altered to "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, throughout England and Wales." The President of the Committee was the Archbishop of Canterbury: and the vice-presidents numbered among them the Archbishop of York, several bishops, the Lord High Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and a number of peers.

A sub-committee was also appointed; and its first work was to recommend that a central school for the education of a thousand children should be established near the city of Westminster, and that a similar school should be established in or near the city of London. Temporary rooms were meanwhile adapted to the purposes of a school in Gray's Inn Lane.

Some doubt was felt by several members of the committee as to the part that should be taken by Dr Bell



in all this organisation ; and the Bishop of London "wanted to exclude Dr Bell altogether from the national schools, except as an occasional adviser," and seemed "likely to knock up the whole scheme by his perverseness." This would surely have been to play Hamlet without the part of Hamlet. Mr Marriott, an enthusiastic ally of Dr Bell's, supported the Bishop of London on all points but this ; and thought that "for this he will hate me, but *that* is more *his* business than mine." At length all difficulties were settled, and all jealousies laid to rest, by giving Dr Bell a permanent appointment in connection with the society, and by electing him "an honorary member of the general committee."

The head-mastership of the Central School was given to a Mr Johnson, the curate of Grasmere, who had introduced the Madras System, at the suggestion of the poet, and had carried it out with great success. Wordsworth himself had placed three of his own children under his care ; and in a letter to Dr Bell, in 1811, expresses his delight "that the great work goes on so well : and it is some consolation to think, in the present afflicted state of Europe, that there is at least one small portion of it where men are acting as if they thought that they lived for some other purpose than that of murdering and oppressing each other."

While on a visit to Grasmere, Dr Bell made the acquaintance of the poet's sister, Miss Dorothy Wordsworth, whose assistance he asked in the correction of his books. Miss Wordsworth accordingly remodelled, and in fact rewrote, his work on the Madras School ; but Dr Bell subsequently threw the manuscript aside. The

fact is, that Dr Bell wrote a terribly lumbering and painful style, and no one now can read his books; but then no one can speak for another as well as the man himself—however clumsily and stupidly he may speak.

Dr Bell's introduction to Mr Bamford at Grasmere gives a not uninteresting glimpse of the state of teaching in the beginning of this century. Mr Bamford was the head-boy of the grammar-school at Ambleside; and when Mr Johnson went to London, he was sent to take charge of the school at Grasmere. "I was sitting one day," he says, "reading Baptista Mantuates, while a little brat was squeaking his letters before me, when an elderly venerable-looking gentleman entered the school." The custom in Grasmere school was for the master to do as much reading of his own in the school as he could, and to "hear the lessons" of the children, who came up separately four times a-day to "say" them. This ancient superstition still lingers in some parts of the country, under the name of "the individual system." Mr Bamford gives a bright and pleasant picture of Hartley Coleridge. "Hartley was very irregular in his time of attending school. He used to run in about ten o'clock, with his hat on his head, chewing a slate-pencil in his mouth. 'Where have you been?' Hartley, laughing, 'I really don't know.' 'You are a strange fellow, Hartley, to go on in this way. Get me forty lines of Homer in such a book.' 'Shall I say them now, sir?'"

The System was now spreading itself over the country. Mr Marriott tells him that, near Lutterworth, he will "find several parishes rendered comparatively a heaven

upon earth by teaching." And Mr Justice Park wrote to Mr Marriott that Dr Bell's "plan is one of the most stupendous engines that ever have been wielded, since the days of our Saviour and His apostles, for the advancement of God's true religion upon earth."

The Central School was now beginning to do good work, but also to be a source of some trouble. The "masters and mistresses" who had come to be trained as teachers were, in many instances, "unable to write, and in some even to read;" and what was worse, they seem to have shown themselves quite indifferent to the merits of the System. In the Charterhouse, however, where it had been introduced, the System seems to have been successful; and the Archbishop of Canterbury entertained Dr Bell "for an hour with eulogiums on the effects produced in this school by the Madras System."

During this period, young Bamford seems to have been his private secretary and amanuensis. Of Bamford he took possession body and soul. He would have him in attendance at six in the morning; and sometimes till eleven at night. His chief work was transcribing, "from little scraps of paper and backs of letters, the chaotic effusions of Dr Bell's ardent mind." Young Bamford hardly dared to speak to a friend or to call upon an acquaintance; and he "looked upon all others who spoke kindly to me, or wished me to seek some relaxation, as insidious enemies." "He exacted of me," Mr Bamford goes on to say, "the prostration of the intellect, the affections, and the actions." For all this absolute devotion of time and soul, Bamford was paid chiefly with promises. Dr Bell also represented to him

that the copying and recopying of the notions, ideas, plans, and suggestions which day by day he committed to odd scraps of paper was "real training, far better than being at the University." And Mr Bamford adds, with half-unconscious humour, "nobody knew where it might end, or what you may come to, if you give yourself up to this thing."

The Central School was in the meantime prospering more and more. It was introducing into England not only a new type, but a new tone, in school-work. The Report of 1812 says, among other things: "The pleasure and delight children take in their school, wherever the Madras System of education is introduced, is a well-known and gratifying fact. . . . Children who had acquired, at their admission, the most disorderly habits and ungovernable conduct, have actually been reformed. This is not only visible in the school, but it has been observed by the parents at home, many of whom have not been backward in confessing the same with tears of joy and gratitude. . . . Flagellation has not once been resorted to, . . . which shows that self-discipline, as well as self-instruction, is produced by the new system of education."

The National Society was also prospering, and widening its hospitable borders with great rapidity. In 1812 it had 52 schools, with 8620 children, under its care; in 1813 their numbers had grown to 230 schools, and 40,484 children.

About this time, Dr Bell, who was always travelling up and down the country inspecting schools, visiting patrons, and in every way "prosecuting his discovery,"

got into trouble with the Bishop of Durham, his friend and patron, in the matter of Sherburn Hospital. The old men—"the brethren," as they were called—were dissatisfied both with the quality and the quantity of their food. Dr Bell had left them, the year before, "in a state of unusual satisfaction and contentment;" and, in a letter to the bishop, he boldly takes the bull by the horns, and indicates that their complaints do not originate with the old men themselves, but with those "who are ever in search of something wherewith to annoy and oppress me." And his curious egotism makes him bring forward, as his reply to those charges, the following statement: "The crime, which will never be forgiven me, is, that a man, who has not given himself up to party, should have made a discovery, and prosecuted  
1 that discovery at every hazard and expense." The bishop assured him, in return, that "the opinion he had formed respecting the necessity of inquiry into the situation of the poor brethren, was the result of cool deliberation." The Doctor replies that, "as soon as he can consistently shake off his positive, immediate, and imperative duties and obligations, he will hasten to the spot." The difficulty slumbered until the beginning of the year 1814, when the bishop wrote again. Dr Bell now made haste to put things right as far as he could. In a long letter to the bishop he quietly says that "the out-brethren never placed themselves under my observation. Still, however, I think it most reasonable that attention should be paid to their situation." This is a curiously abstract, far-off way, of stating a duty, by the very man who has to perform the duty. He then goes

on to descant upon "the advantages which the brethren enjoy." These advantages seem to have consisted of one suit of clothes a-year, an allowance of beer, an apothecary, a tip now and then, and food. "Each brother," says Dr Bell, "has also a small gratuity on signing a lease. Their diet and allowance are set forth in the accompanying paper, on which I observe that some of them use no beer, and none of them, I believe, small-beer,—the table-beer alone being sufficient for their daily beverage; cheese they find unnecessary. Their meat, milk, and other allowances are much more than they can consume. They sell a part, and some of them lay up the money. Several die possessed of considerable funds; others give to their relations and friends; and others spend the money, to the injury of their morals and their health, at the public-house, or elsewhere." The bishop appears to have been satisfied with the Doctor's explanation; and he was now free to go to and fro in the country, and to give all his time to the pursuit in which his whole heart was engaged, while the old men went on vegetating, and wending their slow way towards the grave.

In 1814, Dr Bell "added an important addition to his invaluable system." It illustrates the permanent condition of wonder and admiration of himself in which the Doctor lived,—a wonder not "the seed of knowledge," as Lord Bacon calls it, but the fruit of ignorance, that "this important addition to his invaluable system" consisted of making "the children stand while they are learning their lessons;" and the humane persons intrusted with the execution of this new idea state "that

no inconvenience whatever has been observed from the children remaining at continued lessons, even two or three hours together." To keep young children standing for two or three hours together was surely something very like cruelty.

Mr Johnson, the head-master of the Central School, was obliged to give up a great deal of his time to showing visitors over the school, to explaining the system, and to the training of teachers (among whom was a young Persian); and Dr Bell thought it advisable that he should be relieved of his duties as master. Accordingly he one morning fell upon Mr Bamford with the sudden intimation that he was to be the master of the Central School. Mr Bamford was dumfounded. "I received the intelligence," he says, "with real grief. . . . I shed tears; but go I must, and that very morning."

London was, in the year 1814, "crowded with foreigners, among whom were the Emperor Alexander and his sister, the Grand Duchess of Russia,—the latter of whom had expressed her intention of visiting the Central School." Dr Bell wrote several times to the Grand Duchess, sent her copies of his reports and works; and in one of his letters he asks permission "to lay his books at the feet of his Imperial Majesty, at any hour, as he goes out or returns, so as not to occupy a moment of that time which was so fully employed." The Emperor of Russia was not so scrupulous about *his* time,—which surely was also of some value. Dr Bell achieved the interview he sought; but he had to wait five hours in an ante-room for it. "The Grand Duchess," he says, "soon" (this must mean soon

✓ after the five hours of waiting) "brought in the Emperor, and after a while left us. After a time" (Dr Bell's notions of time are singularly illogical and self-inconsistent) "the Emperor and myself were left alone, and I acquitted myself, on the whole, very badly, but had a very gracious reception, and very gracious leave."

After a short time spent at Ryde, to recruit from the hard work of the London season, Dr Bell paid a visit to Ireland. In a letter to the Speaker, asking for introductions to persons of position in Ireland, he delivers himself of a neat and compendious theory of education: "Teach the Irish to read, write, cipher, and train them in the principles of morality and religion, as the Scots, Swiss, and Swedes are trained, and they will resemble in character and conduct the Scots, Swiss, and Swedes." In this year of grace 1881, it is interesting to compare this theory of Dr Bell's with the actual state of that unhappy country. He also quotes from Hume that the Irish "had all the vices of a nation not tamed by education." At the root of Dr Bell's theory there lay two fundamental blunders. The first was, that civilisation meant conformity to the type in the mind and conduct of Dr Bell himself, whereas civilisation is as multiform and as rich in types as Nature herself; the second was, that what has not been done by the great unconscious powers in thousands of years can be done by one conscious man in a few months or years. Humanity is not so shallow, nor are civilising processes so short and hurried. Let us do all we can, but let us not try to interrupt or to anticipate the work of vast cyclical currents.



## CHAPTER XI.

## GROWING FAME.

THE fame of Dr Bell had now spread over England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and letters poured in upon him every day requesting advice or assistance in the foundation of new schools. His mind was filled with the System—possessed by it through and through. He could think of nothing else; he spoke of nothing else; he wrote about nothing else. He was devoured by this single aim; he had become in every respect a one-ideaed man. Everything, both external and internal—every trait in the characters or minds of other men—was submitted to the standard of the *System* and approved or condemned by that. A teacher was looked upon as lost to his profession and to goodness if he thought of anything else at all; and there were no lights or shades in Dr Bell's appreciation of a character. "The Moorfields School insufferably bad; the Irish school bad; the master president of a debating society; what better can be expected of such a man?" The "discovery" he had made was of infinite value to the human race. He scolds his friend Mr Watts for thinking that his books were a little too

dear. "A discovery is made," he says, "and is given without patent, and at an incredible expense to the author, and it is too dear to those who profit by it at four shillings and twelve shillings! It should have been published in quarto, and sold for five guineas—this has sense in it. . . . You will not soon be reconciled by me." The ebullient Doctor's idea of patenting the plan of asking one boy to teach another, and selling the description of his plan for five guineas, is very characteristic. But in all ages there are to be found men who would like to patent the Atlantic Ocean or to bottle up the English language. / x

Dr Bell not only went about the country himself, to direct or to organise, but he had several assistants in this work—among others, Mr Grover, who organised, on the Madras System, schools at Manchester, Salford, Leeds, Bolton, York, and Sheffield.

At the close of the memorable year of 1815, Dr Bell revisited, after an absence of more than thirty years, his native city of St Andrews. Scenery did not interest him; the progress of towns he did not care to watch; hardly a trace of politics is to be found in his letters; schools and the System absorb all his thoughts. "Nothing," he writes to a friend, "is curious, or interesting, or beautiful in my eyes, but the faces of children, but the infant mind, but the spiritual creation." He loved children; he believed in children; he believed in the System; he believed in every detail of it. "If the master do not immediately," he writes, "adopt the new system in all the departments of his school, especially by teaching every letter, monosyllable,

and the syllabic lessons of the spelling-book, by writing them on the slate, I shall entertain no good hope. Let him talk to me for ever of difficulties, want of room, etc. etc.,—he will talk in vain. I *will not* listen to him. . . . Difficulties in the instruction and discipline of a school are created by the master, or often handed down to him."

There were, of course, enormous advantages in this enthusiasm. But it had its drawbacks. Dr Bell was constantly making alterations in the details; and he expected the teachers to be as loyal to, and as fond of, every new alteration as they had been of the old plans. "Besides," says Mr Southey, "his manner of condemning trifling inaccuracies in those schools which he visited in his travels, was often unnecessarily harsh and violent; and while the slightest omission called forth unlimited blame, it required a very high state of perfection to obtain his commendations."

Every cult has its mysteries; and the worship of the System very soon developed several. One of the chief mysteries was I L T O. Dr Bell is "glad Davis is so jealous about I L T O. . . . It is beautiful to see its effects. . . . I fear I shall not sleep soundly till I hear from you, or see it producing the same fruits in Baldwin's Gardens as in Bishop Auckland. . . . Wherever it is attended to as it ought, and duly understood, it will do all that can be done for a school. I have gone to the full length of my tether. I can go no further. It leaves nothing more for me to do. All the world will in time learn every lesson by writing it. . . . Believe you have not

done it as it ought to be done, till you are *delighted* and charmed as all are, where it is performed rightly.

. . . It is completely done at the Barrington School; and *all* there think it *all in all*. I think it consummates my labours and leaves nothing more for me to do. . . ." Dr Bell, then, had come to the Hercules Pillars of Elementary Education; and there were no more worlds for him to conquer. Everything that the human intellect could do had been done; the bright consummate flower of his thought was I L T O; and the coping-stone had been placed upon the immortal edifice of Primary Instruction. What was this I L T O? It was nothing more than that children should write their letters\*as soon as they had learnt them; and these four letters were learned first, as the easiest to write. It was a small anticipation, a slight instalment, of the well-known *Schreib-Lese-Methode* of Germany.

## CHAPTER XII.

## DR BELL ON THE CONTINENT.

Soon after the battle of Waterloo, the English began to resume their old habit of making the grand tour. The Continent had long been closed to them by Napoleon; and they were now glad to get back to their old playing-fields—their former holiday-making places—and to travel about under a brighter sky and in clearer air than are generally found in London. Dr Bell was among the number. He left London on the 18th of June 1816, and arrived at Paris on the 21st. He found, on his arrival at Paris, that the Society for Elementary Instruction had nominated him an honorary member. But he very much feared, in fact he “knew, that the beautiful simplicity of the new system is ill adapted to the genius of the French nation.” Among other places which he visited, he went to the school of the Duchesse de Drevas. There he found “about seventy boys, in bad order, noisy, with all the Lancasterian nonsense, loss of time, and dreadful clattering of hands and slates;” and he found his friend, the Abbé Gualtier, “most bigoted and prejudiced: *he* contends that they do already as to emulation, etc., as I propose, and advocates even the

noise." No discoverer likes to hear that his "discovery" has been found, and found out, before : "*Pereant isti qui ante nos nostra dixerint.*" He soon left Paris and travelled south. Somewhere between Dijon and Dole, on the 16th of July, he "conceived the idea of abridging my works into one volume perpetual (*sic*)."

He comes at length to Yverdun, and at last meets Pestalozzi. But he mentions the meeting with no emphasis whatever. He does not seem to understand the greatness or the significance of the man. He mentions him quite incidentally—mixes him up with people that no one ever heard of. This is the way he is introduced : "July 30th at Yverdun, Mr and Mrs Langton, Pestalozzi, Mr Akerman. . . . An explanation from the venerable chief of his principles. The development of the faculties—the mind, the heart, and the body—sum up, I think, what he said. From the principles he derived his art. I explained that mine arose from experience." It had come to this that Dr Bell was so fully absorbed by the System that he could understand or sympathise with nothing else. "Sum up, I think, what he said !" As if Pestalozzi's explanations were like the passing gossip on a staircase of a world-hardened dowager. Why, Pestalozzi had given his fortune, his time, his labour, to the education of the poor, and had received nothing in return ; Dr Bell, whose merits are unquestionably great, had received just as much from society as he had given to it. Dr Bell grew complimentary and solemn, and Pestalozzi turned it off. "When I said that Pestalozzi was the father, friend, and companion of his pupils, he replied, 'And the fool who takes them by the

nose,' taking one of them who was in the company by the nose." No doubt Dr Bell was shocked. He goes on: "Pestalozzi has twenty masters for one hundred scholars; . . . a multiplication of masters to attend, elaborate, and instruct the children *viva voce*, to prevent emulation, and to tell whenever a mistake is made, without stopping." But now and then he breaks into admiration: "The gymnastic exercises are incomparable."

In a letter from Yverdun to his friend Mr Morris, Dr Bell points out that "every professor must have a prejudice against an innovation which would expose the whole tenor of their system, or want of system. There is also a natural jealousy in their republic of letters: why should not *we* on the Continent improve as well as they in England? It will be long before the new system is sufficiently understood to put an end to such speculations. Every one wants to remake a discovery which has only been made after the world had existed almost 6000 years." But that is just the beauty of the "world!" The world is perfectly new to the new human being.

" Und alle deine hohen Werke  
Sind herrlich wie am ersten Tag!"

Dr Bell had got it into his head that the world had "waited" for his "discovery" for six thousand years; and that then there was to be nothing after but rehearsing the wonderful discovery. But the good and warm heart of the Doctor often got the better of his crotchet. Further on in the letter he says of Pestalozzi: "The

chief I am charmed with : he has much that is original, much that is excellent. . . . I love the man. . . . He is a man of genius, benevolence, and enthusiasm."

Returning home from Switzerland, he made his way by Holland, and had the new and rare pleasure of going down a large part of the Rhine on a raft.

Soon after his return home, his thoughts went out towards America. "I often think," he writes to Lord Kenyon, "what a field America presents for the new system. The low state of education there ; but, far above all, no institutions, no prejudices, to encounter. The impulse thither appears irresistible." But Lord Kenyon cannot bring himself to approve of America. He thinks that young nation is "hollow and unsound." He thinks it has no principles. He does not even believe it ever will have any. "I fear," he writes in reply, "there is not, and never will be (would there might!) principle enough in America to work upon to do good, even by your almost all-powerful System."

In 1817, the Crown Prince of Sweden sends over a Mr Swensson "to take notice of the principles and the method of learning, for which not only England, but all Europe, is indebted to you ;" and Dr Bell replies that Mr Swensson "shall receive every instruction which can be given him in the knowledge and use of the *new organ* of the human mind for the multiplication of power and division of labour in the moral and intellectual world." The *Novum Organon* of education—that was now Dr Bell's way of talking about the Madras System.

We now find Dr Bell, at the age of sixty-four, work



ing away as indefatigably as ever on his I L T O and A B C. "I have satisfied my mind that there is no difficulty in teaching the alphabet. I have applied a tutor to every child—made copying to be done first, the tutor helping as much as possible—repeating, and requiring to be repeated, the letter on which the child is employed—registering each letter taught—reading aloud, and taking places for every possible superiority, and writing afterwards from dictation on the opposite side of their slates." What a great deal of misery—slow, numbing, mind-destroying misery—has been inflicted on children for want of a little previous inquiry—of a simple, open-eyed preliminary examination into the matter they were asked to learn! The A B C is the proverbial beginning of everything; and so it is made the beginning—and in many places still is the beginning—of what is called education. But to "know" the A B C is simply to be able to attach a number of meaningless sounds to a number of meaningless and uninteresting marks; and the child is not one whit the better—rather the worse—for having had to put his mind through an arbitrary drill. Even now, the superstition, that it helps a child to make him say *doubleyou-aitch-eye-see-aitch* before he says *which*, and that *tea-aitch-ee-why* is an "account," both rational and philological, of *they*, still survives in some of the darker parts of educational England.

In September 1817, Mr Johnson wrote Dr Bell that the Central School was "never in so flourishing a condition as at present." There were 52 masters and 21 mistresses under training, and more than 1000 scholars

in the school. But in the same letter he informs Dr Bell that the famous I L T O has been "tried and condemned by the Committee as worse than useless, and ordered to be struck out of the type." But the strong-hearted Doctor was quite equal to the occasion. "It may be buried for a while," he writes in reply, "or in a corner, by the hand of power; but it will rise again, and spread over the world, and live for ever. It were then vain to take up arms against eternal truths." Meanwhile, after a little further correspondence, the alarm proved to be vain. It was merely the term, the heading, that the National Society wished to abolish. The practice itself, designated by the term—that is, simultaneous instruction in reading and writing—became a permanent practice in all the schools with which Dr Bell had to do. It is significant, however, that about this time we find that the Madras System had more difficulties to contend with at St Andrews than at almost any other place where it had been introduced.

## CHAPTER XIII

## HEREFORD AND SHERBURN.

WHILE in St Andrews on a visit, in the beginning of 1818, he was delighted and surprised by an offer, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, of a stall in Hereford Cathedral, "of good value." He had expected that the duties would be light, and that, holding this post along with his Mastership of Sherburn, he might still be able to give the larger part of his time to the promotion of his System and the foundation of new schools. But he found that the post was not without its duties. He had to preach four English and four Latin sermons; he had to sit for forty days in a prebendal stall, without any duty to perform (surely the hardest kind of work for his active brain), thrice every Sunday and Saint's-day, and twice every ordinary week-day; and all this time he was not allowed to ride or walk outside the walls of the city.

While residing at Hereford, he, of course, lost no time in setting to work on the schools of the place—the Grammar and the National Schools. For the latter he preached a charity sermon at St Peter's. His subject was *The System*. It was not a short sermon. The

Doctor was in his element, and could have discoursed for days on the *Novum Organon*. He kept his amanuensis up night and day copying and recopying it; and he entered into a long and detailed history of the discovery of the System, of its progress in this and other countries, and of the reasonable expectations that might be formed regarding its future. The eager preacher went on reading for an hour, then made a short pause to wipe his spectacles. The congregation, who had sat on with considerable patience, now thought the sermon over and rose to go. But, "Dr Bell, suddenly recollecting himself, exclaimed 'God bless me!' and instantly recommencing, went on for half an hour longer."

A new idea now came into Dr Bell's head. He had noticed, and rightly noticed, the great wrong and injustice done to children in the mode of bringing them up and teaching them. He accordingly wrote a little book on the subject and gave it the title, 'The Wrongs of Children.' The difficulty was to find a publisher. Lord Kenyon, in a letter to the Doctor about this time, remarks,—“Murray, I presume, like other booksellers, considers chiefly the likelihood of a sale, as I remember my revered friend Mr Jones told Rivington once, he believed if the d—l was to write a book they would publish it; and Rivington said, 'To be sure, if it was a good thing.'”

He was now sixty-six years of age, but with that indomitable freshness and eternal youth<sup>1</sup> that were his characteristics all through life, he became extremely desir-

<sup>1</sup> “Whom the gods love die *young*,” because they live young.

ous of correcting his Scotch accent. Dr Johnson once remarked that much might be done with a Scotchman "if he were caught young;" but surely he would never have tried to induce him to alter his way of speaking when he was nearly seventy. However, the Doctor set manfully to work. He requested his secretary, Mr Davies, to note down during sermon those words in which his Scotch accent most evidently appeared; and, when he returned home, he practised the art of pronouncing them in Mr Davies's English fashion. He was also very anxious to be able to speak so as to be heard in every part of the Abbey; and for this purpose, Mr Davies would take his seat in different distant parts of the building and report. But the voice of the enthusiastic Doctor, though of great volume, was never clear enough or articulate enough to be distinctly heard in the more distant parts of the cathedral. In fact, he did not speak—he roared.

There had been murmurs of complaint arising from Sherburn Hospital, to the visitor, the Bishop of Durham, in 1813; and now, in 1818, again stronger complaints were uttered by the ancient brethren. It was the beer. Dr Bell, assisted by his chaplain and the agent, set to work at once to inquire into the causes of these complaints. The brethren were examined individually and collectively, and their answers were written down. The result of the inquiry was that Dr Bell appointed two of the brethren to inspect the meat, and two to inspect the brewing, and to see that five bushels of malt went duly to the hogshead of beer. "But," says Mr Southey, "the flame, which had but slumbered,

burst out anew" in 1819. The flame was stirred up by a designing person called Michael Angelo Taylor; and this gentleman at length succeeded in inducing the bishop to appoint a commission. This commission discovered that only 1s. 6d. was allowed for the weekly allowance of bread, beer, and two pounds of cheese. On the other hand, it appeared that Dr Bell spent £35 a-year on each of the in-brethren; and that he provided each of the old men with greatcoats, to be worn in chapel in cold weather. The fact is that, though it was not the fault of Dr Bell, but of the traditional system, the hospital was *farmed*, and nothing was more likely than that an absentee master should get into all kinds of trouble.

In the beginning of 1819, Dr Bell was so fortunate as to obtain a stall in Westminster Abbey, in exchange for that at Hereford; and he was installed by the Dean of Westminster in the end of January.

As Prebendary of Westminster, Dr Bell had to attend the coronation of George the Fourth in 1821; and here he was very nearly taking an unwilling part in a terrible socio-political scandal. The Queen had been refused admittance to the Abbey, and was waiting at a side-door, apparently for the purpose of effecting an entrance should an opportunity present itself. On approaching the door, some one announced him to the Queen—"Dr Bell, your Majesty,"—and alarm seized the reverend Doctor lest the Queen should ask him to allow her to enter the Abbey. He was too loyal a man to take a side in these disputes; but he showed himself equal to the occasion. He hurried on, bowed to the Queen, and

rushed past her through the door, "leaving her outside." It appears that, after the coronation, certain of the properties were distributed among the prebendaries and other officials who took part in the ceremony. Dr Bell's share was a piece of carpet, some lamps, the gold cloth laid upon the coronation-chair, and one or two other things; and these he used long after to exhibit as "valuable relics."

It will be remembered that the Madras System had been introduced into the Charterhouse schools. In regard to the success of this experiment, it may be useful to quote part of a letter from Lord Kenyon, an old and stanch friend of Dr Bell's: "I maintained that the examinations at the Charterhouse were very striking; that the whole of Horace's odes, or a whole book of Homer, might be examined upon; and that *no boy*<sup>1</sup> in a class would be found deficient, either in the repetition, being called upon to go on after a few words were recited to him, or to render it straightforwards by memory into English, if required so to do. I mentioned also that every other matter connected with the subject, whether historical, geographical, mythological (or, if connected with the Sacred Scriptures, doctrinal), was to be explained by any boy who might be called on to do so. I added, likewise, the fact, that Dr Russell found 100 or 150 boys, and now had above 450; was quite overdone with his labours, and now found everything easy to him. I forgot to mention that he had now no corporal punishment, but did not forget to insist that no such was necessary, which, with respect to the Madras

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

schools, the bishop and ladies also maintain. I said you never did pretend that your System would supersede the necessity of able masters, and carry on the whole matter mechanically, which they all seemed to conceive had been advanced."

Perhaps the most important duty that Dr Bell performed at Westminster Abbey was to read the funeral service over the body of Mrs Garrick. She was buried in her husband's grave; and when it was opened, a copy of Shakespeare's plays was found resting on his coffin.

Dr Bell was, at no time of his life, a clear or methodical writer. He said the same thing—he had only one or two ideas altogether in his head—over and over again in different ways, in long lumbering sentences, and with a ponderosity of manner that repelled and disenchanted. For the last twenty years his anxiety about what he called his "style" had been growing upon him to such a degree, that in 1823 it had become a disease. Mr Davies, his amanuensis, was the chief victim of this habit of anxiety. The too anxious Doctor rendered his manuscripts almost totally illegible by interlineations, erasures, and corrections; the proofs of his books were as bad; the revises were very little better. He sat up himself at these corrections till one or two o'clock in the morning, and when the time for getting up came, his mind was ready with a fresh batch of alterations. These altered and corrected manuscripts Mr Davies had to copy out on large paper in a fair hand; and he had to be ready to do the same for the alterations of the next morning. Thus he seldom got more than two or three hours' sleep, and sometimes none at



all. He was kept up the whole night. But even this was not enough. The Doctor used to send the proof-sheets of his works to his friends Lord Kenyon, Mr and Mrs Johnson, Mr Southey, Sir James Langham, and others; and then, when they came full of corrections, he simply tossed them aside. The work he was now engaged in was his 'Manual of Instructions' for conducting schools on the Madras System; and the work upon it was so hard that Mr Davies at length broke utterly down. The book appeared in 1823.

But Dr Bell must go on writing and saying the same thing over and over again and again. He accordingly set to work on an abridgment of this Manual. He went on with it—it was to be only a little book of forty-eight pages—year after year. In 1827 he writes to Mr Southey: "Advanced years, growing infirmities, and decay of mind and memory, together with the difficulty of compressing within forty-eight pages what was before a hundred and forty-eight, and leaving nothing out, are the causes to which I ascribe my slow progress, in the course of which I often turned my eyes towards you; but with so small a matter as a sixpenny or shilling tract for common use, I could not bring myself to break in on your time, occupied as I always know it to be."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LAST DAYS.

IN the end of the year 1830, Dr Bell had fixed his residence at Cheltenham, which he never again quitted. He was now seventy-seven years of age; his voice and throat had become affected, and he was unable to articulate without considerable difficulty. He had also great difficulty in swallowing; and his breathing was hard and much impeded, especially in the morning. What the doctors feared was ossification of the upper part of the windpipe.

He was now becoming very anxious about his works—both the present and the posthumous editions; and, among other plans, he formed one of a complete edition of all he had written and published, to be edited conjointly by Mr Southey and Mr Wordsworth. Mrs Wordsworth went down to Cheltenham to see him about this project; but Dr Bell was both ill and irritable—full of anxiety about the disposal of his property, and the future fate of his “ideas”—and Mrs Wordsworth cannot be said to have enjoyed her visit. Nothing, in any case, came of the proposal.

His money, in fact, had become a terrible burden to

him. He had laboured—both by saving and by enterprise—to make money; and his success had been very remarkable. His chief anxiety now was that the money that was going to be left behind him should go to the promotion and immortalisation of his own educational ideas. One of his chief occupations and amusements in his latter days had been the making, unmaking, and re-making of wills; and a large part of Mr Davies's work had consisted of copying and recopying these wills, and the endless interlineations upon them. Now, however, as things began to look serious, he thought it was time to employ a lawyer. Nay, more, a great fear and haste seized upon him; and “make all despatch—no time must be lost,” became the everlasting burden—the monotonous refrain at the close of all his messages and letters. ✓

On the 11th of May 1831, without consulting any person whatever, he gave orders for £120,000 to be transferred to the care of four gentlemen in St Andrews, who were to act as trustees.

His sister, Miss Bell, had expressed a strong wish to go down to Cheltenham and pay a visit to her brother; and with some reluctance he gave his consent to this, and forwarded to her an invitation. No sooner had he given this consent, than he wrote her another letter to recall it. But she had set off before this second letter came; and, on her arrival at Cheltenham, was received with warm affection by her brother. He made her a present of his cottage and grounds, of furniture, goods, and chattels, and also of “the carpet, and the covering of the coronation-chair which fell to me at the coronation

of King George the Fourth." Most unfortunately, however, Miss Bell had taken it into her head that her brother was not in a fit state to make a will, or to manage his own affairs; and his odd ways, his sudden bursts of irritability, and his apparently causeless anxiety, seemed to give strength to this opinion. Upon these phenomena Miss Bell meditated much, until at length she went so far as to say to other persons in the course of conversation, that "he was not in his right mind." Dr Bell had always been a shrewd man; and a few strange signs very soon put him upon the track of her intentions. He was unable to speak; but he silently placed a paper in her hands, requesting her to leave the house immediately, and offering her a choice of residence at St Andrews, at London, or at Malvern.

In his last will, dated the 13th of August 1831, he named as trustees of the whole of his property the Earl of Leven and Melville, Walter Cook, Esquire, Writer to H.M. Signet, Lord Kenyon, the Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland, and Bishop Walker of Edinburgh. The trustees of the money intended for St Andrews were now to be the subject of unceasing interpellations. He wrote to them "to engage at any expense an agent to inform him, day by day, what was going forward." "My solicitude distresses me much. Excuse my anxiety. There is danger in the delay of a day." These trustees were to erect a building in harmony with the style of Blackfriars Chapel—one of the most beautiful remains in a city full of ecclesiastical fragments—to appoint four teachers, and also a rector of the Institution. A paper, containing his own suggestions, was drawn up

by Professor Alexander; but, when the paper was concluded, he himself drew up another in reply to his own ideas. "I am, indeed," he wrote, "reduced to a sad dilemma. . . . It afflicts me beyond measure to think that the funds laid up for giving full effect to a system of education, the object of which is the health, the happiness, the moral, religious, intellectual, and literary improvement of the young (to a degree impracticable before) by a new and stupendous engine, may, by mistake or otherwise, be directed to different purposes. . . . The only remedy that occurs to me is to desire that the funds be put into Chancery." Such was the utterly hopeless condition of Dr Bell's mind—such was the faithless outlook that presented itself as he lay at the door of death.

He was afraid that some of his money would go to the support of a number of ancient nuisances—such as "charity schools, hospitals, asylums, colleges, and universities." He lumped them all up together, and took no note of any distinctions that might be made, or differences that might possibly exist. Nothing was to be done except for the "Madras (or, as it is often called, the monitorial) system of education." Before that system, education did not exist. "Do not talk to me of your colleges and your universities. They are asylums for the maimed, the halt, and the blind; more, they are receptacles for the dead, who cannot hear the new word of life which I have spoken, and who must sleep on."

While Dr Bell was in this anxious state of mind—drawn hither and thither by every new suggestion, driven hither and thither by every new letter he received from

his correspondents—splitting up his money into portions of £10,000, and distrusting the very men to whom he proposed to intrust these portions, a paragraph in the newspapers met his eye about the establishment of a Royal Naval School near London. “This *is* a godsend!” he muttered; and a letter is immediately sent to Sir Henry Blackwood the chairman, to offer him one of his sets of £10,000. He was duly thanked; and Captain M’Konochie was despatched to Cheltenham to converse with him about the constitution and purposes of the new school. Captain M’Konochie found that Dr Bell had totally lost the power of articulation, and could communicate with others only by writing on a slate. He sat with his head sunk on his breast, raising it quickly now and then when he was excited. When he agreed with the speaker, he pointed to his eye; when he dissented, a strong grunt was heard in his throat. He wrote question after question on his slate with the same impulsive eagerness that had marked his whole life. “What do you think of my offer?” “Do you know my system?” Captain M’Konochie had established a school on his system in Scotland. “But where did you learn it? Have you read my books?” “Some, not all.” Davies is sent off for the last production. “Have you seen that?” “No.” “Then take some.” “Where have you seen my system at work?” “In Edinburgh and in Chelsea.” “Good! Where is the plan of your Naval School?” “Oh! we have not got the funds yet.” “But my £10,000—that will give you funds at once.” “True: but we have just learned your kind intention, and have not had time.”

"Well; but you have time now. I must have a plan. When will you have it? Can you bring it to me to-night at eight, or to-morrow morning? A plan we must have." Captain M'Konochie, seeing no way of escape, undertook to bring him a plan in the morning. Dr Bell stuck to his own views—in small things as well as in great. He asked advice from everybody; he always rejected it. It was pleasant to him to see how many roads he need not go; and how little those who were advising him knew of what they were talking about. But he liked the excitement—he was fond of keeping up the discussion, and had "some reluctance finally to conclude, because then the business which was by this time almost necessary to him (the activity of his mind having become morbid) would be over."

On Captain M'Konochie's next visit to Cheltenham, he met the trustees from St Andrews. These gentlemen had been presented with £120,000 for the good of their city; and they were now called upon to give up half of this splendid donation. There is no doubt they could have legally held Dr Bell to his transfer; but this would have been ungracious. The old man was afraid they would. They, too, were asked for "a plan;" but they did not even know the rudiments of the *System*. They were not even willing to try to make a plan; they were afraid Dr Bell would disapprove of it. "They were methodical in their way of doing business; he was capricious and vehement. They were slow; he was quick. They were very patient; he was, at times, very violent. Fire and water would have

combined more easily." Such are the trials of donors and trustees.

And now an epistolary dispute arose between Dr Bell and his St Andrews trustees. The letters—some of them—extend to ten printed pages. He accuses Provost Haig, a perfectly honourable man, of using some of his money, on the eve of an election, to bring a fresh supply of water to the city. Mr Haig replies: "I beg to say that I never fingered a shilling of your money, nor did I ever make use of it in any way to serve a political purpose." Dr Bell heaps letter upon letter and accusation upon accusation. He pours red-hot shot into the defences of the St Andrews trustees—quiet honest gentlemen, who were quite willing to help him in every way. He accuses them of having "kept him in a state of incessant agitation and excitement;" of availing themselves of "my loss of voice to convert a large portion of my property to objects and purposes at entire variance with those to which I had proposed to devote them;" of "denying my last days the comfort which I sought for from an epistolary participation of your doings" (this only meant that they should write him by every post); "of concealment;" of writing "declamations to give a death-blow to my debilitated constitution, or for a posthumous epistle to the grave, which tells no tales;" and of "trying whether I was so much alive as to be able to discriminate between sophistry and prevarication and sound reasoning and good sense." Thus, in the first part of his long and fiery letter, he complains that they do not write enough; while, in the after part, he complains that they want to write him to



death, in order that they may have perfect freedom to do as they like. And he concludes in the most characteristic way: "Finally, I adjure you, by the living God, to forward copies of this letter immediately" to certain legal authorities in Edinburgh. The trustees replied in the meekest and mildest manner. But the volcanic soul was in full action; and he at once wrote off to the other Principal in the University and three other professors a short note, asking "what immediate and brief additional measure can be taken to enforce compliance with *all* my requisitions and injunctions, that will lose no time, require no formal deed on my part? What can be done—what can you do—what can I do, in one moment? Write by return of post and by every post. . . . Excuse haste. Late for post, and not one must be lost." Poor old gentleman! he asks several excellent men to be his trustees, and then he appeals to others whom he hardly knows to tell him what to do, what can be done, what they can do. Boundless suspicion; infinite isolation.

Another long epistle followed, in which, among other flowers of a luxuriant rhetoric, he says that "Dr Bell's little finger, when put to the work, will do more than the whole of St Andrews." He had forgotten the quiet idyllic life there—how, in transcendent and sky-like repose—the academic inhabitants refused to believe that they had left the fifteenth century. Dr Bell had got into his head an insatiable desire to see "extraordinary visitors" appointed, who were to be a check on the ordinary trustees. But this the trustees demurred to, on the common-sense ground that the "extraordinary

visitors" might themselves want "extraordinary visitors" to watch *them*, and—as is so often the case in Scotland—all the power needed to create these new Madras Institutions would disappear in friction.

The trustees did their best to mollify Dr Bell. They took advantage of the opportunity of the first quarterly examination to write a flowery and laudatory report of the two new schools, in which they state that they carried in their hands (as if it were a foot-rule) Dr Bell's 'Manual' to apply to the English school, and his 'Ludus Literarius' to the classical school; that everything was done as Dr Bell would have it; and that the "proficiency of Andrew Bell Morrison" (a relation of the Doctor's) was "sufficiently attested by the unexceptional evidence of the pedometer;" that "Mr Waugh has adopted the *Novum Organon*;" and that Virgil, with the happy anticipation of true prophecy, had some time previously described in his verses a Madras school:—

"Ac veluti in pratis, ubi apes aestate serenâ  
Floribus insidunt variis, et candida circum  
Lilia funduntur : strepit omnis marmure campus,  
Fervet opus."

But this appeal to his literary and pedagogic vanity, to his family love, and to his weakness for well-worn classical quotations, utterly failed. Dr Bell could not be moved. He therefore executed "a holograph deed, which may or must be my ultimatum." In this deed he appointed a large number of miscellaneous gentlemen as patrons, and another number as "supplementary trustees." The central idea of his holograph deed was

that the St Andrews Trust should be managed, not by local persons, but from Edinburgh. But, only a few days after, Dr Bell writes: "Since writing the holograph deed, dated 21st December 1831, I have executed a deed, dated 29th December 1831, which perhaps supersedes it." *Perhaps*: he was not quite sure. And, further on, he launches out into another denunciation of his own trustees—whom he calls "ostensible advocates and insidious patrons;" and he enumerates the "studied embarrassments, machinations, devices, distortions, and perversion of the propositions of a dying, speechless, and insulated man, with funds undisposed of."

In the beginning of 1832, Dr Bell grew worse, but his mind was as active as ever. Mr Davies's bedroom was next his own, and he could call him whenever he awoke. This "he now generally did at three, four, five, or six o'clock;" and Mr Davies had to get up at once, read his own manuscripts to him, receive his corrections and recorections, transfer them from slate to paper, read the manuscripts over again, and correct and recorrect them once more. Up to Thursday the 26th of January 1832, his intellect was vigorous and his memory unimpaired. The day after he was very weak; and it was plain that the end was not far off. His friends went to see him. "He was sitting in his chair, his head inclined forward, his breathing short." When Mr Allen came in, he just looked up, and then dropped his eyes again. At half-past ten he was asleep, but still in his chair. Mr Davies and his two women-servants knelt round him, holding the hand of

the master whom they loved so well, in spite of his passionate manners and exactingness. His breathing became softer and gentler, and, when they next looked up, he was dead. So passed upon a quiet wave of sleep into the unknown world the soul of the fiery eager Scotchman, who had fought a good fight, kept faith with God and man, and who had also been the lover of, and beloved by, children. He was seventy-nine; and, as a prebendary, his body was buried in Westminster Abbey. ✓

## CHAPTER XV.

## DR BELL'S CORRESPONDENCE.

DR BELL's correspondents were of all kinds, ranks, and nationalities; and one might have expected to find a good deal of interesting matter—a good many characteristic remarks, unconscious revelations, curious national traits, and piquant anecdotes—in them. But it is not so. Dr Bell kept every note, letter, paper, and pamphlet he received during sixty years; and it is only astonishing how barren the mass turns out to be. Everybody, with one or two exceptions, writes in the most ponderous and sesquipedalian style—it is plain that Dr Johnson was still all abroad in the air; and everybody pays everybody else the most elaborate compliments. The end of last century was the period of the minuet; and George III.'s sons and daughters danced that slow and elaborate dance for entire evenings—hours at a time—with each other. The personages in Dr Bell's letters walk and talk as if they were dressed in the stiffest pasteboard or brocade, as if life might be spent in writing and in reading letters, as if the old antediluvian span had come into existence once more.

Dr Bell writes of his two young American pupils:

"To London they owe several very genteel accomplishments. . . . They keep no company, but that in the very first line of life. . . . Your sons have, among their con-disciples and most intimate friends at St Andrews, an earl, the son of an earl, the son of a bishop, the grandson of a bishop, and the sons of knights in great number." Thus people talked in pedigrees, and arranged their conversation according to precedence. And these two young gentlemen themselves, going home to Virginia rather unexpectedly, cannot say that their father and mother were both glad and surprised to see them, but must put their facts and feelings in this eighteenth century fashion: "Our meeting with papa and mamma was joyful beyond description. The engine of paternal affection was conjoined with that of surprise, by no means weak, you will allow. We announced our arrivals with our own persons."

And we find a Mr Sikes opening a correspondence with Dr Bell after this wise: "My acquaintance with you has indeed been short; but it has served to persuade me that you possess those respectable qualities of head and heart which ought to make me desirous of improving it." In fact, one might just as well take to reading the 'Polite Letter-Writer.'

The few women who write to him are by far the best of his correspondents. They say what they have to say in fewer and simpler words than the men, some of whom write in the most long-drawn, ponderous, and dreary style. Mrs Berkeley, the wife of the then Dean of Canterbury, is one of these correspondents. She thanks Dr Bell for "half-a-dozen elegant dried

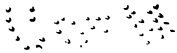
bottle bonnets" (history has forgotten to give any description of these), and advises all young men "who mean to succeed, ever to plough with the heifer, if they mean to rise; for, whether the lords of the creation know it or not, or are too proud to own it, we females, one way or another, openly, or, as the French say, *sourde-ment*, whether we be wife, mistress, sister, or daughter, guide the world." And she goes on to volunteer to Dr Bell, who must have known the climate of St Andrews very well, a description of a St Andrews winter, which is perfectly accurate. "Alas! we" (in Canterbury) "have not had a St Andrews winter. I wished myself there all the vile frosty severe weather. If I had a good safe balloon, Mrs Finsham, who is now with us on a visit, and I both declare we would set off in it in the beginning of November, and stay till May, then up again to England. My neighbours used to provoke me by saying, 'Well, madam, this can be nothing to *you* who have been in Scotland.' I rave at them. I can conceive that an Edinburgh winter may be bad enough, but in London I never suffered so little cold as I did in St Andrews in winter: no, they were pleasant indeed." The present writer thoroughly agrees with Mrs Berkeley. Dry, mild, genial winters are the rule at St Andrews; and there is also at all seasons the most blithe, light, inspiring, and uplifting air in the whole of Great Britain.

Another female correspondent, Mrs Cleghorn, is more sentimental, and not so sensible as Mrs Berkeley. When Dr Bell writes her that he is going to India, she replies: "Your letter, my dear sir, I read over with a mixed

pleasure, and could not forbear shedding tears of mingled pleasure and pain when I considered,"—and so on.

The hard worldly wisdom which marked the latter half of the eighteenth century shows itself without the smallest particle of shame or shyness in these letters. Mr Dempster sets forth the then art of rising in the Church: "Orders taken by a man who has only one patron is a dangerous experiment. But, if that one patron has one prior engagement, the danger is quadrupled; the danger, indeed, is converted into a certainty of starving, and not alone; for among the fine girls in England even a curate cannot resist matrimony; and then God have mercy on the poor curate, his poor wife, and poorer children! It is not to be done. But orders, to return to America, in the clerical line, is not so bad."

The oddest people appear in the correspondence at wide intervals. Among odd people those who continue to discover perpetual motion must always be reckoned. Dr Lucas is among this number. He writes, in 1789 "I shall cheerfully communicate to you, that my assertions of having discovered the *Perpetuum mobile durante materiâ*, are not without foundation." Fortunately, no squarer of the circle attacked the sympathetic Doctor. But it is astonishing what hundreds of pages of temporary rubbish Southey thought it right to print in the *correspondence* of and with Dr Bell. Here is an average example: "When you are at leisure, ascertain the component parts and proportions of the best plaster used at your settlement, with the mode of preparing it, and favour me with a memorandum on the subject."





Mr Millingchamp, when on a visit to Canton, sent Dr Bell a pleasant account of the Chinese theory of the weather. Mr Millingchamp had raised the astonishment of the Chinese at his learning, and they "tell me I have *very cunning inside*. . . . According to Lan-  
ing-tyen, there are two species of air; or, as the Yukin more pointedly expresses it, the air has two sexes. When they agree, the seasons are regular, the weather favourable, corn grows; when they disagree, and the she-air will not permit the he-air to approach her, the consequences are terrible. He flies round her in a whirlwind or typhoon. Earthquakes are caused by the male air enclosed in the bowels of the earth, and struggling to make its escape. The souls of good men after death take up their residence in the he-air, and become josses or semi-gods; the souls of bad men pass into the she-air, and become so many devils. . . . Of the several causes which authorise a divorce, the first is a woman talking too much."

We catch a good many glimpses of Lord Cornwallis' campaign with Tippoo Saib; but there is very little of the smallest interest. Colonel Floyd writes: "I felt the consequence of my corps at Sattimangulum, and I knew the loss of it would entail the loss of all. I was anxious in the extreme; but, I thank God, felt perfectly collected and greatly animated. I was struck with the remark of a respectable sepoy of the 25th battalion. He had a large white beard. During the cannonade on the 13th I went along the front, and spoke to the men. I looked as I really felt, perfectly serene. Every man met my eye with a smile.

stopped to hear something a sepoy said, and was addressed by the venerable bearded I have mentioned thus: 'Sardar, on these occasions General Smith always led us to the enemy's guns.'—It is Colonel Floyd also who sends Dr Bell Goethe's piece of worldly wisdom—

"Lasset den Narren eben zum Narren seyn, wie sichs gehört."

Turned into plain English: "For God's sake never give yourself the least trouble about ill-tempered and foolish people, but consider it a great honour and a blessing to be hated by them." From one of his letters, too, we obtain a glimpse of the state of Europe in 1792: "The era is singularly eventful towards crowned heads. Sweden assassinated; Denmark insane; Britain has known her misfortunes and accidents; Orange, though no crowned head, chief of a great country, nearly expelled, but restored by armed force; France dethroned, imprisoned, and liable to further misfortunes; Empire<sup>1</sup> said to be poisoned; Portugal insane; Spain not very wise. I see none but Prussia, who reigns in full, personal prosperity; . . . Russia, though victorious, greatly reduced by her late war, and personally infirm. I think there are no less than three sovereigns in Europe liable to attempts on their persons, owing to the colour of the times." All this might have been written again, with considerable truth, in 1848, and again in this year of grace 1880; only, instead of three sovereigns "liable to attempts on their persons," there is now indeed not

<sup>1</sup> Austria probably.

one, unless it be some of the minor sub-kings in the south of Germany.

Colonel Floyd was also a practical philosopher, and a man who, though he wrote clumsily enough, had a broad bottom of common-sense. He had mentioned some of his cares to Dr Bell, who had referred to them again. Colonel Floyd replies from Pondicherry—a French settlement in India—"When I name cares, it would be unjust and ungrateful to fancy myself weighed down by them. On the contrary, I feel and own, with a heart full of piety and gratitude, that I have no cares that grieve, but all the enjoyment a reasonable being can well have. My wife and myself have uninterrupted health; our children are all I can possibly wish them; my affairs clearly above board; my friends tried and true; and I reckon it among my chief comforts that there is no person living to whom I bear hatred: I don't mean to say I have no enemies, but they are so obscure, or so impotent, that I can neither fear nor hate them. . . . All are on pretty good terms here. Christmas Eve is a time of much religious performance. The young Saviour of mankind is represented in wax, after having been duly announced by the angel to the shepherds, and great numbers of young angels fly about like butterflies."

It is odd to find controversies which even now occupy the time and thought of sensible and considerate people, raging and getting discussed in the very same form and almost in the very same phrases in the beginning of the century. A landowner in the Highlands, a Mr Mackenzie, is anxious to introduce the System. But he

"found the Highland Society so enamoured of the Gaelic language, that it would be in vain, at present at least, to expect them to give up this favourite idea. They are even thinking, I am told, of instituting a Professor of the Gaelic language at one of the Universities. Ossian is the only inducement to this attempt." What would Matthew Arnold and Professor Blackie say to this? Mr Mackenzie goes on: "As a living language, Gaelic clearly creates a barrier between the Highlander and his fellow-subjects, which excludes improvement of all kinds, and robs the country of the benefits it would otherwise more completely derive from this part of its population." This is the argument which Dr W. Chambers has lately advanced, and treated with great aptness and ability.

It strikes one with an odd feeling of old newness and surprise when we find Dr Bell, in replying to Mr Mackenzie, telling him that "the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, in the year 1806—not much unlike the French Convention—choose to debate on the existence of God."

Dr Bell was always strong upon the point of learning at first-hand from facts—from nature—from children themselves. In a letter to Richard L. Edgeworth, he says: "There is only one book which I have studied, and which I take the liberty to recommend to you. It is a book in which I learned all I have taught, and in which you will find all I have taught, and infinitely more than I have taught. It is a book open to all alike, and level to every capacity. It only requires time, patience, and perseverance, with a dash of zeal and

enthusiasm in the perusal. This book you have filled me with the hopes of seeing soon in your hands.

"In reading this book my way is to submit every hint which it suggests to the test of experience; and I have transcribed into my humble essay no observation till I had established its authenticity and demonstrated its truth in the mode best adapted to my capacity, most congenial to my habits, and most satisfactory to my mind—namely, that of facts and experience." And Dr Bell was perfectly right. There is an immense mass of second-hand and unauthenticated "knowledge" afloat in society; there is a large circulation of paper-notes with no bullion which they represent; and he is a benefactor who brings us back to the truth of nature and the firm rock of fact.

Dr Bell goes on, always coming nearer and nearer to life and truth: "Our Saviour tells us that if we would enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must become as little children. It is, then, that among children, and from them, and by becoming one of them, we are to learn those simple doctrines of nature and truth, innate in them, or which readily occur to their minds, as yet unbiassed by authority, prejudice, or custom. . . . What remains to be done could be done by thousands better than by me, if they could be brought to give their mind to it and take pleasure in it; but it is a drudgery to most men from which they seek only to escape." This opinion of Dr Bell's that "teaching is a drudgery" is still held by thousands of people—and even by teachers themselves; and it is probably in looking for the true answer to the question—*Why is*

*teaching a drudgery?* that a cure will be found for a prevalent disease, and for much of the *malaise* that afflicts modern society. This question, of course, includes the two larger questions: What is the average teaching just now? and—What is the best teaching?

Dr Bell's advice to Mr Edgeworth regarding the spirit in which he should prosecute his inquiries is also excellent: "You will grow," he says, "in the necessary knowledge as you go along. Do not harass yourself in pursuit of new information. Do not distract your mind by hunting for a variety of schemes. Lose no time. In the course of your proceedings, you will learn what you can nowhere else learn." He continues his advice into details: "Short lessons, short books. . . . Nothing is so facile and pleasant as to teach *ab initio*; nothing so difficult and ungracious as to unteach those who have been ill taught."

A few letters from S. T. Coleridge and Robert Southey appear in the correspondence; and these are to some extent interesting. In one, written 15th April 1808, Coleridge makes the sensible remark that "objectors are far more pernicious than avowed antagonists. Men who are actuated by fear and perpetual suspicion of human nature, and who regard their poor brethren as possible highwaymen, burglars, or Parisian revolutionists (which includes all evil in one), and who, if God gave them grace to know their own hearts, would find that even the little good they are willing to assist proceeds from fear,<sup>1</sup> from a momentary variation in the

<sup>1</sup> Or like those persons mentioned by an old Scotch lady: "They're like cats—all the good they do comes from ill-nature."

balance of probabilities, which happened to be in favour of letting their brethren know just enough to keep them from the gallows. Oh, dear Dr Bell, you are a great man! Never, never permit minds so inferior to your own, however high their artificial rank may be, to induce you to pare away an atom of what you know to be right. . . . From fear, distrust, and the spirit of compromise, proceeds all that is evil." And he adds: "Be assured, while I have life and power, I shall find a deep consolation in being your zealous apostle."

The following is a good illustration of the fact that many people still believe that human beings are made to fit into systems, and not that systems are invented for human beings. Mr D. P. Watts writes to Dr Bell in 1809, to tell him that a Sunday-school is going to be opened in Weymouth; "and, as it commences about the time of commemorating the entrance into the fiftieth year of the reign of his Majesty, the new school is to open with *fifty* boys and *fifty girls*." No sympathy can be felt for all or any of the boys and girls over that number; and, when Mr Watts and his allies were so exact, why did they have the girls at all? That was to put his Majesty's reign into its hundredth year.

The same Mr Watts happily hits another odd human failing. A large proportion of civilised beings in these islands are often much troubled with the ulterior consequences of what they do, and are afraid—if they throw their walnut-shells about—they may hit a genie in the eye and blind him. They want to be miniature Providences, and to "trammel up the consequence" wher-

ever they can. A certain party in the earlier part of the century, maintained that "education (by which they meant reading and writing) abates the energy of the lower orders, relaxes their laborious exertions, and damps their ardour." Mr Watts, when at Weymouth, sees a boat capsize. The young officer was drowned. The two men clung to the boat. The wind was blowing a gale, and the waves were high. Three boats at once set off to save the men, who were holding on to the keel of their boat. "A thought occurred to me, that I would examine if these brave boatmen could read and write, and I took some pains to ascertain the facts; and it proved that, of the five first boat's crew, four could read and write; and of the second crew, three could read and write." Hence it is demonstrated that "education" does *not* damp native ardour or freeze the genial current of the soul. Further on in his letter, Mr Watts stated as an axiom what Stein was driven upon by hard experience: "What has overwhelmed other states in Europe — French superiority or their own moral infirmity? The stability of a country begins in the school."

It is cheering to find a man writing in this way in the year 1809.

"THE STABILITY OF A COUNTRY BEGINS IN THE SCHOOL."

That would not be a bad motto for a statesman to bind between his eyes.

Mr Watts writes in another letter, of the year 1811, of "a schoolmaster in Swabia, who had superintended a seminary fifty-one years with severity. It had been



inferred, from recorded observations, that he had given 911,500 canings, 124,000 floggings, 209,000 custodies, 136,000 tips with the ruler, 10,200 boxes on the ears, 22,700 tasks by heart, 700 stands on peas, 600 kneels on a sharp edge, 500 fools' caps, 1700 holds of rods; and the report closed with this quotation from Martial:

“*Ferulæ tristes, sceptræ pædagogorum cessant.*”

We have no means of ascertaining the truth or even the probability of this terrible list of charges against this unnamed and unknown schoolmaster; but he reminds one of the famous German judge of the sixteenth century, who is said to have sentenced 30,000 people to death.

Coleridge called Dr Bell “a great man” to his face; and, in another letter (in 1811), Southey couples him with Clarkson, and is proud that he has “the honour of numbering among my friends, the two greatest benefactors of the human race who have appeared since Martin Luther.” But nature provides a steady crop of “great men”—especially in the United States; and many of them are among the least known; for both before and after Agamemnon, great and brave men have lived and died and been forgotten. The better for *them*.

The correspondence is full of advice from clergymen, both to others and to men of their own profession. The best piece of advice is contributed by Colonel, now General, Floyd, in a letter to Dr Bell: “I never shall forget the answer of one of our primates to a body of clergy, who brought him an address, complaining of the increase of sectarian and itinerant preachers, and asking

his advice what they should do. "Gentlemen," said the revered man, "out-preach them—out-live them!"<sup>1</sup>

Dr Bell's old friend, Mr Dempster, contributes a description of the processes of Scotch law, which is not without a modicum both of picturesqueness and of truth. "The whole fraternity of agents," he says, writing in 1813, "those in the bailie's town courts, the sheriff's county courts, the Admiralty and Commissary Courts, the two Courts of Session, the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, the Court of Appeal from them all in England, where indecision personified presides—all, all are now incorporated in one great fraternity. They have a common seal; and their motto is procrastination. They copy the rules of the fox-hunter. A cause is their game. The chase is their sport. Covers are formed to protect the animal, and prolong the sport. Worrying at starting is penal. They give the game *law* in both senses of the word. They glory in the length of the chase, but seldom insert its duration in the newspapers. Here the metaphor ends. They regularly inform their client, they hope *next session* the cause will make an important step. They submit patiently to have the blame thrown on their shoulders, and retaliate by throwing it off their own backs on the adverse agents' shoulders; and, O God, have mercy on the poor client! He reminds me of a pool in summer. Evaporation imperceptibly dries him up. Let the constant copies for your scholars be—'*Law is a bottomless pit.*'"

In a letter of 1814 to Mr Abbot, the then Speaker

<sup>1</sup> Live better and longer—beat them at living.

of the House of Commons, Dr Bell indicates a truth which still has some value for us of the present day. He says: "Almost all the reformers terminate where they begin, with Acts of Parliament, boards, secretaries, treasurers, and salaries, for doing what they either do not know how to do, or do not do what is most easy to be done, and what now is the time to do—that we are happily at peace with all the world." Dr Bell means that people are too ready to rest content with machinery. They elect school boards; they get able men to sit upon them; they select a most intelligent and vigilant clerk; they give him a number of vigorous assistants; they invent books, and schedules, and reports of all kinds, which are returnable and returned each day and every day;—but they often forget that the teacher is the heart and brain of all this beautiful and well-contrived machinery, and that, if he does not work as a strong humanising power, all the rest may be merely waste paper and soulless statistics. What are the influences that are actually at work to cultivate the young soul and mind—by literature, by science, and by art?—that is the real question for school boards and for that active and enthusiastic class that in these later times go by the name of educationists. To build schools, to put living and registering machinery inside of them, is no more than to build depots, and enter the number of *cadres* in the Army Department books, and then say to the world, and to your country, that you have got an army. These things one ought to have done, and not leave the other undone.

Mr Dempster has peculiar and not unreasonable

views about Ireland and the mode of climbing to a bishopric. He writes (27th August 1813), "Do you never think of extending your labours to Ireland? There is a field! The wittiest, sharpest, handsomest people in Europe left in a ferocious state of barbarism, between a learned Protestant clergy who do nothing, and an ignorant, bigoted, Catholic priesthood who do too much, because the Government does nothing for them. . . . Don't moderate your ambition to Sherburn Hospital, but continue your progress to the mitre. *For very little money you may be paragraphed up to the episcopal throne.* A few superficial essays on chemistry, and an apology for the Bible, have made bishops; flogging the Westminster schoolboys, archbishops. What are their labours or merits compared with yours? If well puffed, as it would admit of, what will not the rising generation owe you? Ploughmen, between their yokings, reading the Old Testament; the New read by the milkmaids and dustmen; cobblers solving problems algebraically, and girls drawing maps of Europe on their samplers." It is plain that Mr Dempster thought himself standing in the morning light of a new millennium of education. His apportionment of the Old Testament to ploughmen, and of the New to dustmen, is more antithetic than correct.

A Mrs A—— has also some original ideas on education—as, indeed, which of us has not? How good education is, like religion, for other people; and how easy and pleasant is the architecture of Spanish castles for the benefit of mankind. In building these, the foot-rule is not wanted; all that is wanted is a metaphor, to

which you stick wherever it carries you ; and it always carries you into new and wonderful countries. Mrs A——'s metaphor is "the river of language." She says, after other ebullient expressions of hopeful faith : "It appears likewise to me, from the character of languages, that they might be more simplified, and made more easy by bringing them from the source ; that carrying up the stream must always be the more difficult way. We learn that, in the time of the Reformation in Scotland, children of six or seven years of age read the Hebrew and Greek Bibles. If the Hebrew is the root of all language, and can be so easily attained, would it not be the most fit to begin with ?" This is a delicious educational morsel. The authenticity of the facts, the insight into history and human nature, the rapidity and cogency of the reasoning, all make it well worthy of the attention of the Education Department, the London School Board, and the Association of Head-Masters.

A Monsieur Timueff writes from Yverdun on the 25th of May 1819, to Mr Johnson, the Head-Master of the Central School, and gives a tolerably lucid account of the thought and work of M. Pestalozzi. It may not be out of place to select a few sentences from this long letter. M. Timueff begins at the very beginning. "Man," he says, "comes out of the bosom of nature as an individual being—that is, he brings into the world only as much as nature has given him. . . . Those amongst whom he grows have a holy sacred obligation to educate him. Nature herself declares it in the relations between the parents and their children.

"Education can be perfect only in so far as we follow the course nature points out. The science of human nature—so great that it may even be called *the knowledge of the world*—is far from its perfection, and, consequently, education also.

"Nature points out the means for every education. The tender *love* and pure *faith*, animating all members of a family, give us a most excellent opportunity to observe and to imitate the means nature employs for their development. But the time of such a pure and exemplary family life is not yet come. Till that is the case we are in want of schools. Now, you see, if the school must properly be called the house of education, it must be *a perfect image of pure natural relations*. By that the holy obligations of father or mother lies upon the teacher or upon the mistress; and, if they feel the importance of their duty, as father and mother to their children, then nature, by the voice of the heart, will tell them what they must be to their scholars; and the scholars, by the same voice of nature, will be called on to be what for their instructors they must and can be. *Reciprocal love and faith are the movers, if one desires to obtain a true education.*

"M. Pestalozzi's principles are :—

"(i.) *Give the things before the signs.*

"(ii.) *The perfection of conclusions depends on the perfection of instruction.* That is, the more exact intuitive impressions you can convey to the mind by the way of the senses, the more perfect will the understanding be.

"(iii.) *The child must be led from simple on to more*

*complex ideas ; and from one simple combination to the next more intricate.*

“(iv.) *Let the child be spontaneously active ; secure him from faults ; and only suggest to him what he is to do.*

“The elements of M. Pestalozzi’s system are—form, number, and language.

“*Form.*—Every form can be reduced to its element ; and this element is a line. By the gradual combination of straight and curved lines, the child is led to the analysis of every form ; by the invention of forms the child exercises his reproductive intuition. This entirely pure exercise creates the highest degree of activity in the power of the child’s mind. Then, the form is considered as a *dimension* (in geometry). Here intuition, judgment, and conclusion combine.

“*Number.*—The element of every number is a unit ; and every number is composed of units. This reduction of every number to units must be supposed before the child comes to *ciphering*. Therefore, mental calculation must precede ciphering.

“*Language.*—Speech is not only the production of very skilfully contrived organs, but the fruit of our thinking spirit. Spirit cannot act upon spirit, for it is not within the conditions of time and space. In this respect language is a subject which clothes itself with a garment which is objective—or which has a material form, that is, sound.”

Dr Bell did not think much of Pestalozzi ; he was too deeply engaged in brooding over his own System. One of his correspondents, a Mr Bather, quite

agrees with him : "Pestalozzi is, I daresay, a wise and good man ; but he seems to have invented nothing. . . . If I understand the little I have seen of him, while you by your new power enable one man of sense to educate five hundred children, he will require about a score of philosophers to educate one hundred. What he does in the way of teaching, he does exactly as you do, by means of the 'Assiduous Exactor,'<sup>1</sup> always at his pupil's elbow ; but you have shown us how to create these exactors by self-tuition ; but, if we are to follow him, we must import them all, from whence I know not."

A Sir James Langham sends to Dr Bell an extract translated from a Pekin Gazette, and remarks that the ideas of the Emperor of China and of Dr Bell jump marvellously together : "His Majesty the Emperor has also examined the progress made by his fourth son, a lad of fourteen years of age, and is much disappointed to find him quite unable to *write verses*. The emperor remembers well that his august father, the late emperor, examined him when he was *thirteen* years of age, at which time verses were daily composed by him. His Majesty attributes the present failure to the prince's *tutors*, and has ordered a complete set of new masters." This is distinctly imperial ; his Majesty orders "a complete set of new masters" with as much ease as he would a new suit of clothes or a new set of furniture for the prince's room.

In 1831 Southey was making ready to write a general

<sup>1</sup> A phrase of Quintilian's : "Ne opus quidem erit hac castigatione, si assiduus studiorum exactor adstiterit."



survey of the state of education in England; and he writes to Dr Bell from Keswick on the 15th of January: "What I have to show is that mischief is done, not by having too much education, but too little; that, if it were general, it would no more make the children of the peasantry above their station than it has done in Scotland; that, of some kind or other, let Government do what they will, it must become general, and is becoming so; and that, if they do not surround their establishments with a well-constructed outwork of national schools, nothing can save them and their establishments from destruction. It was no fault of yours that this was not done many years ago; and I have no sin of omission to answer for upon this score." But what was seen with perfect distinctness by Mr Southey in 1831 is not even yet universally admitted in 1880.

In the same way, Professor Leslie of Edinburgh sends Dr Bell some excellent remarks which still continue to point the way to improvements that are not adopted, and to sensible methods that are kept out by the pressure of routine. "Custom lies upon us like a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life." "Nothing," says Sir John Leslie, "can be more galling or preposterous than the usual mode of loading the memory with long, barbarous, and absurd grammar rules, which only retard the acquisition of the language, destroy all its beauties by tasteless mechanical associations, and are forgotten as soon as by practice the language has become familiar. . . . A great desideratum in schools

is a proper selection of specimens of composition. Besides religious and moral subjects, passages from poets or orators, we should have an extensive selection in history, biography, natural history, the mechanical arts, manufactures, navigation, and commerce. It would be of national importance if men of higher talents would lend their aid to this design. . . . I should propose that these grammars and school selections should be stereotyped, and furnished in such portions as should be wanted, at a penny a sheet. A boy need not have more at a time than would serve him half a year. Nothing can be so wasteful or preposterous as to put into a boy's hand a thick volume, which is generally thumbed and useless before a score of pages have been studied."

Mr Hugh Cleghorn, at one time a Professor at St Andrews, expresses in a letter of the 19th of October 1831, some very strong views as to the maintenance of endowed institutions. His opinions are very like those of Mr Robert Lowe: "If these institutions," he says, "cannot support themselves, no adventitious assistance can render them useful. Learned retirement and secluded leisure for study is nonsense. The world is the school of letters as well as of business. The political agitations of Greece produced her poets and philosophers as well as her statesmen, while the monkish establishments of our fathers, with their seclusion and endowments, produced only the jargon of technical language, and fettered themselves and their disciples with the impertinence of academic forms. They educate men most

profoundly learned and most consummately ignorant ; and I am almost inclined to regard them as asylums for opinions, which, like cast-off mistresses, have been kicked out of every decent company." There is much strong good sense here ; but it is surely too absolute. What are we to think of Chairs of Research ? And Goethe speaks quite differently :—

“ Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille  
Sich ein Karakter in dem Strom der Welt.”

Mr Cleghorn goes on to make some remarks which are not without applicability to the year 1881: “If the duration of human life is to be determined by the only rational standard, the succession of great events which have passed during its existence, we are the longest-lived generation that ever appeared upon earth. But, unhappily, man is the only brute who derives no wisdom from experience. For nearly forty years we have witnessed the wickedness and the calamities of France; we have seen her, except during an interregnum of despotism, possessed of a king without power, of a nobility without privileges, of a *posse* of legislators and no law, and of the whole body of the people swearing allegiance to a constitution which they, as yet, have not formed ; and, to crown all, singing *Te Deums* for the national confusion. This unhappy state, mercifully held out to us as a beacon to shun, a branch of our legislators wish to follow as a light to direct. The great body of the people, too, commonly become most outrageous when they have most reason to be contented.”

And he concludes his letter, an octogenarian writing to an octogenarian: "Let us all remember, in the language of Socrates, that 'he who prays for long life, for riches, or for health, prays for the throw of a dice, or the chance of a battle.'"

## CHAPTER XVI.

## DR BELL'S CHARACTER AND SYSTEM.

IF it were said that Dr Bell was a successful man in the field which he set himself to cultivate, and that he made a few warm friends in his passage through life,—that would perhaps be all that could be accurately asserted of his career. He was not an interesting man; he was not a great man; he had very little insight into human nature, though here and there are to be found glimpses of truth; he was singularly narrow-minded; and he was in several respects a terrible bore. There is in his own mind hardly a trace of education—hardly the smallest sign of literary culture. He had read Cicero and Quintilian, Milton and Locke; but he had read them only for the purpose of digging out of them mottoes for the chapters of his works, or passages in support of his own conclusions. There is no more trace of literature or of literary culture in all his voluminous writings than there is in the minutes of a corporation or the report of a banking company. He remained to the end of his days of the opinion which he expressed when he was acting as tutor to his two American pupils: “I thought that a good hand was better than

all the Greek and Latin in the universe." And, even after he was a richly beneficed clergyman, he looks upon grammar-schools and universities chiefly as places where people "contract prejudices." His whole mind and soul were absorbed in the one idea of extending to the whole world the blessings and the peculiarities of the Madras System.

But there is no doubt that his character is interesting from its largeness, its massiveness, and simplicity; and he always seems to have retained his power of attraction for children. It is clear all through his life that he was determined "to have his own way;" but he was not very careful to make that way smooth and easy for others. When Mr Wilmont, one of his assistants, spends two days with him in the country, the time is almost entirely taken up with "lecturings and scoldings." He marries a wife; and he dismisses her. That is all we know. She comes into his biography like a shadow, and she goes out again like a shadow. She is a name and nothing more. He no doubt treated her to a perpetual course of "lecturings and scoldings:" perhaps she was a woman of spirit and replied. This would, in the Doctor's eyes, be high treason, and she must go. We know nothing of her; and the field is absolutely open to every kind of conjecture. Then he was himself very parsimonious; and perhaps her allowances were small. His married life was not a success—as his school life was.

He was eminently able in money-dealings; and if he had gone into business, he would probably have become a merchant-prince. When a tutor in America,

X he trades in currency and tobacco; when going out to the East Indies, he manages to get a free passage—"which will save him £200"—and even to make money on the way by having a class of officers on board. He was the first man to apply to education the principle of "payment by results." "He regarded money," says Mr Bamford, "as the *primum mobile* and only efficient stimulant in the world. He excited masters by a negative kind of threat. He did not say 'Do this, and you shall have so much beyond your regular and fixed salary'—which at best must be barely sufficient to command the necessaries of life—but 'Do this, or you shall be mulcted, or lose your situation.' He would have had all the masters under such an arbitrary kind of control that, if the school did not weekly and monthly increase in numbers, and order, and attendance, and improve in progress, the masters should be subject to weekly and monthly fines, and be paid according to the periodical state of the school. 'I can do more,' said he to the Archbishop of Canterbury, taking half-a-crown out of his pocket—'I can do more with this half-crown than you can do with all your fixed salaries.'" "Vixêre fortes ante Agamemnona;" and Dr Bell is not the only man who has tried to fix burdens on the shoulders of others, which they themselves touched with but one of their fingers. "Payment by results" is a divine thought; and it is beyond a doubt the ultimate test of the lives of all of us. But then it should be applied with complete impartiality to every profession—to the army, the navy, law, medicine, and the Church, as well as to education. The fact is,

that many good people are still unwilling to look upon education as anything but a process which may be carried on by some kind of machinery or other—more or less intelligent. They want to judge it, but to have no hand in it; they do not see that it is the one process in our social life the conductors of which must be frankly and simply regarded as colleagues—as friends and helpers, not as menials and serving-men.

Dr Bell's strength of will carried him from a humble position to a stall in Westminster Abbey—lifted him from the status of curate to be master of a hospital—"a preferment which has heretofore fallen to the first dignitaries of the Church." His strength of will—that was the chief thing in him. It is an admirable and a most necessary quality. But it is not so admirable when unmixed. We do not accord it a large meed of respect when we meet it in a Tropman or in a Tasmanian devil. It is seen to require other qualities to commend it to our higher feelings. "He would have made," says Southey, "a good engineer, a good general, a good statesman;" but he hardly seems to have mounted to the level of a good man, and he certainly was not an adequate husband. He says of himself to Mr Southey: "You know how strong-headed and wrong-headed I am." And then he puts in a bar against his being considered "wrong-minded;" but no one would consider that high praise. The fact is, he cared not a pin for the feelings of other people, unless they happened to be of higher rank or station than himself.

His character is faithfully mirrored in the style of his writings. Cumbersome, clumsy, chaotic, dull even to



heaviness, full of involutions, repetitions, misplaced limitations,—it is a severe penance to be obliged to read a page. He cannot speak; he gets to say what he wants the reader to know by the simple process of “pegging away.” Dr Southey, writing to Dr Bell, says: “A madman, but of great genius, cast my nativity once, and pronounced that I had ‘a gloomy capability of walking through desolation.’” If this meant that he had a capacity for wading through the desolation and monotony of Dr Bell’s papers, the madman was right. Extracts from dull old pamphlets; endless minutes of meetings; long series of motions—in which everything has been moved except the reader’s mind and feelings; reports—and reports on these reports; tables and columns of statistics; letters from boards and to boards about things that every member of each board was glad to forget the moment the letters had been signed; endless repetition of two or three fixed ideas; reading compared with which the dullest Blue-book is lively: these form the staple of the writings of this eager “educationist.” Dr Bell has at most only one or two things to say; and he contrives to hit all round the nail—and, among these strokes one now and then hits the nail on the head.

MUTUAL TUITION—ACCURATE PREPARATION:—that is almost the whole of the educational message he had to deliver to the British nation.

Mutual tuition—this was his “discovery”—this was to regenerate the world. There was nothing too strong to say about it. “Like polarity in the magnet, it had lain hid for ages;” it was “an organ for the multiplication of power and division of labour, in the intel-

lectual, moral, and scientific world ;" it was the newest *Novum Organon* ; it was the greatest benefit that had come to mankind since the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Nay, Dr Bell and his friends were driven upon the language of sacred poetry to express their feelings about it ; and in one of his letters he bursts into an adjuration to this country : " Arise ! shine ! for thy light is come ; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ! " But, if any one were to ask, Where is Dr Bell's System now ? he would receive no answer except from echo. He is as forgotten as the date of the Pyramids ; his works are as little read as Mr Wilkie's " Epigoniad ; " his memory has passed with the snows of yester-year. Not even in the schools which he founded and endowed, and which are bound, by the express terms of his will to use his System—not even in these schools is his name known or his System employed. His portrait looks down with heavy-browed eagerness, and a certain bovine look of mildness, over a scholastic procedure, every step in which he would have condemned with fervour and asperity ; and neither man nor boy regards him. His works lie in the library ; and neither student nor teacher consults them. They are hideous, amorphous, without form, with little light ; they are almost unreadable.

But let us look a little into his works and System, and see whether there is not in them something that may be of use for the present age—something that our modern generation of teachers may learn from.

The central notion is that of *Mutual Tuition* ; and the practical corollary from it is *Self-Selection*. The children

were to teach each other; each child was to rise or fall in his place in class according to his accuracy of repetition; or even to fall or rise from class to class. Before Dr Bell's plan, the master "heard" all the lessons; and forty-nine children were always more or less idle, while the fiftieth was occupied in "saying" his lesson. But now the little boys were arranged in divisions; one of the boys taught; when one was reading, all the others listened, and the next boy corrected when an error was made. The lessons were always very short; and each child prepared what he had to prepare without a single mistake. A register was kept by the monitors and "teachers," and even by the boys themselves; and thus the whole school became a scene of unceasing activity and constant healthy emulation.

Dr Bell's ideas had a root in nature—in the nature of the child. That was their merit. He says himself, "The System has no parallel in scholastic history"—(he means the *history of teaching*—if there be any such history)—"it is essentially discriminated from all others by the inherent principle which constitutes its natural, necessary, and never-to-be-confounded distinction." Now in this and in many other passages, Dr Bell, like other inventors and discoverers, piques himself most on that which differentiates his "system" from others, while it was what he had in common with others that gave it its true value. For all its true value arose simply from the digging down a little deeper into our common nature. Again, like other inventors, he wanted to label the education of this country with his name; but the label has long been shed—it fell off with the necessary

growth of the mighty tree of popular instruction ; and his own eagerness made other people all the more ready to disallow his claims.

The "discovery" of Dr Bell was not what he called his *system*, but the carrying into practice and the school-room of an old, old truth, which in the present day we are all of us a little apt to forget. LEARNING IS A SOCIAL ACT ; it is best carried on under social conditions. It is one of the strongest bonds that knit society together ; and, while it binds and strengthens, it lifts the whole body of society to ever higher and stronger life. That is what Dr Bell really meant. Thus his doctrine of Mutual Instruction is valuable, not because it is new, but because it is old—and eternal. Teach that you may learn ! has been uttered thousands of times by men in all ages and in all countries. You will not have a firm grip of any truth, or even of an external fact, until you have tried to give it to others. This power, like all the highest powers in human nature, grows by spending ; and, in things of the mind as well as in things of the soul, it is more blessed to give than to receive. But the Jesuits—those old-fashioned instructors from whom we have still to learn so much—understood this perfectly, and have enshrined the truth in their dog-Latin—

" Discere si quæris, doceas, sic ipse doceris ;  
Nam studio tali tibi proficis atque sodali."

But in schools there are always great practical difficulties in carrying out the principle. To set pupils to teach each other requires an organisation which has

entirely gone out of fashion in the present day. At best, it could only be applied to those subjects, or parts of subjects, in which memory and drill are alone concerned; but surely in such subjects it would be well to employ it still. To employ it, I mean, as Professor Pillans was wont to do, in small divisions of three or four, coached by one a little ahead of the others. Each member of these small divisions, by going over the passage to be prepared again and again, had every fibre of it worked slowly—slowly, for that is the method and habit of nature (and in education we must reverence and observe the *Naturlangsamkeit*), into the mental marrow of him, so that he could always apply it afterwards,—so that he never forgot it. Plans and methods are subject, in education, as in every other human sphere, to the ebb and flow of fashion; but a great reward awaits that teacher who can, in some practical and practicable manner, reintroduce Dr Bell's central idea of *Mutual Tuition*. Nowadays we are eager to bring every young and growing mind under the direct influence of a powerful and mature mind; and we demand the Best for every little half-fledged creature who enters our schools. The demand is a noble one; the ambition is a splendid reaction from our old sluggish satisfaction with anything—with the Worst. But, while the best teaching is wanted for every child and for every class of children where a *method* has to be instilled, it is not necessary in those parts of instructions where routine and the mastery of details are concerned. In such cases the chief thing is mental companionship, with an after reference to a higher court, to the stand-

ard of perfection in the head-master himself. I am not here defending the "Pupil-Teacher System," or any system. The pupil-teacher, as a *teacher*, is generally a failure. But social learning, where the memory is chiefly concerned—where constant mental drill is necessary, is a condition which ought to be present, to some extent, in all our schools—secondary as well as primary.

The phrase *Social Learning* may be interpreted in many ways, and may be applied after very varying fashions. The man who can hold the attention of one pupil, so that the needle of his mind never fluctuates from the attracting intellectual pole, is an artist. The man who can hold for an hour the eyes and the attention of a whole class, not by threats but by the sheer force of attraction, is a great artist. The man who can invent business plans and carry them out—such that the school shall be a home of perpetual cheerful work, and that every child shall take delight in the pleasant round of labour, is the next to these.

If I were asked in what part of England Dr Bell's main ideas—the true and living germ of his thought—still existed, I should point to a school in a valley on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire. It is there that what is best and most living in his "system" still lives and bears fruit for the present generation. It is there that his two principles—*Everything perfect from the beginning*, and *Mutual Tuition*, are carried into practice under the best conditions and in the fullest measure. Dr Bell is never tired of dwelling on the extreme satisfaction that arises both to the teacher and to the pupil

when, by giving short lessons, every part of every lesson is known without error or hesitation. The perceptions of the child are preserved in their healthy, natural, and unerring state; his articulation is perfect; his conceptions are clear; his memory is free from confusion. In this respect the school at CENTRE VALE<sup>1</sup> is a modern presentment of the truth of Dr Bell's ideas. "Writers, ancient and modern," says Dr Bell, "have observed, and experience confirms their observation, that children do not *tire*, like men, of perpetual attention to minute points." In this school these small points not only do not tire—the child seems to take a positive pleasure in attending to them. But the most interesting feature in Centre Vale school is a novel application of the principle of *Mutual Tuition*. The application is novel; but it is much more profound than anything Dr Bell meant, for it goes deeper down into human nature, and employs a larger number of human elements than have been brought together for harmonious working within the walls of a schoolroom. The application is to the learning of the best poems and passages in our English literature. The precondition of perfect reading aloud has been secured—an accurate, never-ceasing regard to pauses, points, and stops; a full outspokenness, and a clear articulation. Then the parts or elements of the poem are given out; and they are given out in such a way as to interest almost every member of the class. I remember being much struck with the reading of two poems. One was Goldsmith's "Elegy on the Glory of

<sup>1</sup> Near Todmorden.

her Sex, Mrs Mary Blaize;" and the other was Mr Lushington's "Road to the Trenches." It would hardly have struck any one that these poems were susceptible of a dramatic cast—that they were capable of being distributed, as it were, over the class, for full and complete rendering. But assurance, mixed with a most agreeable surprise, would have run into the mind of the listener and spectator when he heard one pupil read with a clear articulation and in telling accents,—

"Good people all, with one accord,  
Lament for Madam Blaize,  
Who never wanted a good word—

and, in a distant part of the room, there rises unexpectedly a young head, who represents the cool detraction of the world, the cosmic care that "trees do not grow into the sky," by quietly remarking—

"From those who spoke her praise."

The effect is wonderful; it is wonderful because it is so true. Another reader takes up the praise of the lady; and still another, from another part of the room, quietly rises to take off the necessary discount. Still another tells us in moving and eloquent words,—

"The needy seldom passed her door,  
And always found her kind;  
She freely lent to all the poor—

when, from the unexpected corner, comes the inevitable equation of the young Minos—

"Who left a pledge behind."



Again is her praise taken up ; again her good deeds find a herald :—

“ Her love was sought, I do aver,  
By twenty beaux and more,  
The king himself has followed her—

but the just interpreter again hands in the corrective—

“ When she has walked before.”

The same kind of treatment was applied to the powerful and pathetic verses called “The Road to the Trenches.” In that poem there are several speakers ; and what they say may well be distributed among different readers. But more, there are several different incidents and different situations ; and these, too, were distributed among the class with singular appropriateness. The soldier in the terrible winter of the Crimea asks to be left alone ; not even a man can be spared from the work of the country to stay beside him. An officer offers his cloak to keep him warm : “ Wrap him in this, I need it less.” The company marches on to the trenches ; they say good-bye. When they return, they find only a little mound of snow ; and their comrade lies beneath it dead. Now the lady who directs this school gives all this a dramatic treatment ; and some may even blame her for this. But what does dramatic treatment mean in this case ? It simply means that every feeling and act of the human mind, which is naturally related to the incidents of the poem, is called into play. This is to begin at the right end. The ordinary “ didactic ” treatment of such a poem begins at the wrong end. It begins with *words* ; it

keeps to words ; and it explains words by other words, which may or may not explain, which may be nothing but an application of the *obscurum per obscurius*. But this living treatment begins with feelings ; it creates the right emotions ; the emotions create the thoughts ; the thoughts create the words ; and the words—even the words of others—are plain from the first, because the reader has risen to the same state of feeling as that which in the author produced the words. Then every thing is as sure, as simple, and as unerring as nature herself. And this is what education has to do ; it has to employ the methods of nature—if it is to have results as good and true. But education is an art. True ; but every art that is a true art has its roots in nature. “The art itself,” says Shakespeare, “is nature.” There are hundreds of excellent poems in our language that would freely lend themselves to the same treatment. But the best is still to say. The reading of the poem unites the whole class into one corporate intellectual whole ; it binds them all together “as with the bands of a man ;” and the story of the “noble, nameless, English heart” makes all of them feel as one. And more, the children, who have an honest and spontaneous liking for what they have thus learned in school, recite their poems to their parents and friends at home ; and thus the best words of the best English minds are made seeds of English patriotism and humanity—centres of true civilisation in this far-withdrawn Yorkshire valley. Pilgrimages to saints, processions of devout persons to kiss the bones or other relics of some dead religious hero,—these we have often heard of or seen, marching to the

music of hymns by the side of the broad Rhine, under the shade of thick-planted walnut-trees. But a pilgrimage for teachers—a better pilgrimage than to the dead—would be a pilgrimage to this living nursery of good and true thought, of clear and frank expression, of the application of natural feelings and natural methods to the processes of school-education. From such a visit teachers would return with new ideas and new strength.

Let us now look back for a few minutes at the difference between Bell and Lancaster. Both had struck upon the same idea of mutual instruction; and it does not matter a straw to us now which of them happened to be a few days in front of the other. The time in which they lived was, in fact, the dawn of popular instruction; and in a dark dawn even a farthing candle is a wonder and a revealer. But now, this new light, precious as it was, has faded into or mingled with the light of common day. The plan of mutual instruction was only a plan—it was far from being a method; but it was a plan which, under certain strict limitations and clearly defined conditions, might still do some good work for us. Among other benefits which it might bring, it might spare the lungs and labour of the teacher, and enable him to keep himself constantly fresh and in good spirits. For a teacher, by allowing himself to become jaded and weary, does as great a wrong to his pupils as he does to himself.

Both sides had the support of statesmen and thoughtful persons; both were heart and soul in earnest, until they began to quarrel, and to ask themselves the barren and stupid questions: "Am I not better than he? Is

not my plan anterior to his?" Both believed in the spontaneous and superabundant activity of the child; and both felt that a school ought to be the home of lively and cheerful learning. When Lancaster found a ✓ mischievous boy, he made a monitor of him. Leaders of men (and boys) have known of this homœopathic cure for long ages. Lancaster, like Jacotot, believed, with all his heart, in the pregnant paradox, "A teacher can teach what he does not know." For the teacher sets the pupil's mind in motion, sets it to work on the matter before him, questions and cross-questions, invites him to repeat and re-repeat, asks new questions from constantly new angles, asks about the inter-relations of every part to every other part, makes him break up every whole into its constituent fractions—recombine them into one whole, and so works his mind to a high pitch of free play on the matter under discussion, that it is turned over and over, and looked at from every side, and becomes completely the possession of the mind. The teacher does this by keeping before him one of the chief guiding-stars of all good teaching—Repetition without Monotony!

Both were lauded to the skies for their "systems," and both have been forgotten—almost even to their names. I have already mentioned the praises showered upon Dr Bell. Of Lancaster's system, the 'Edinburgh Review' of 1811 says: "This method may most truly ✓ be pronounced a capital discovery. Printing is not more capable of being applied to diffuse all truth and all knowledge than the beautiful discovery of Mr Lancaster." Both had the patronage of the King, and both

were not one whit the better for it. Both raised enormous sums by subscription, founded scores of schools, trained hundreds of teachers, taught thousands of children; and thus both sowed in England that seed of popular instruction, the large and happy fruits of which we are now beginning to reap.

Both were good men, lavish of themselves, their time, and their powers; but Dr Bell was the more fortunate. Lancaster was in danger of dying in a debtor's prison. A story, which shows the character of the man and his strong power of attraction, is told by Mr Corston, the old and devoted friend of Lancaster:—

“I visited him to apologise for not going his bail, because the number of writs which might be issued, were the present ones satisfied, would only reduce two families instead of one to want and suffering. After my departure he rang for the sheriff's officer to take him to the Bench (Court), but obtained leave to call at home on their way. After being alone with his grief-stricken family a little, he opened the parlour-door and said to the man, ‘Friend, when I am at home, I read the Scriptures to my family: hast thou any objection to come in?’ ‘No, sir,’ the man replied, and went in. He soon became deeply affected, and joined in the common grief. Soon after the worship was over, Joseph said to him, ‘Now, friend, I am ready for thee.’ They had not gone many paces when the man said, ‘Sir, have you got no friend to be bound for you for this debt?’ Joseph replied, ‘No; I have tried them all.’ ‘Well,’ replied the man, ‘then I’ll be bound for you myself, for you are an honest man, I know.’ He surrendered him at the

King's Bench, and they took his security for the debt."

Both tried to understand the nature of children, and to enlist on their side and attach to their educational efforts all the feelings and powers of nature that they could find. In this regard we have still something to learn from both of them.

Both had the habit of repeating themselves, of rediscovering their old discoveries every morning, of saying over again, in slightly varied words, or in differently arranged sentences, the one idea round which their minds revolved like satellites. They did not possess the idea; the idea possessed them. Hence they became, for the sake of the poor, bores of the first magnitude. There is one very amusing instance in the works of Dr Bell. When he was nearly seventy, he took it into his head that he would write a book on the "Wrongs of Children." Children were not understood; they were badly taught; they were ill-trained; nature was flouted and insulted in their persons; much cruelty was practised upon them; much of their lives—of the time they could never get back—was wasted. Dr Bell would blazon forth these wrongs, would show the remedy, would right them with his own hands. Accordingly, he writes a book, and looks out for a publisher. The book is published. But there is not a single word about the wrongs of children from the beginning to the end of the book. It is the old story retold. It is once more the "New Organ, or Intellectual Power, which had escaped the research of every age and of every country,"—and so on. The one sole wrong mentioned in the book is

the shadowy wrong done by La Bruyère in an essay on children, in which he calls them "*hautains, dédaigneux, colères, envieux,*" and a number of other unpleasant things. And the book closes with the usual number of "letters and documents" from eminent persons regarding the wonderful merits of the New System.

In spite of all this, we must not forget the valuable truths preached by Dr Bell's tongue and pen, and still more by his practice. The most valuable of these truths are perhaps the three following:—

1. Let the principle of self-selection prevail in every school; and so arrange the life of the school that every pupil seeks and finds his own place.

2. Learn by teaching.

3. Let there be no residuum in a class. Every pupil has one kind of talent at least.

x The modern danger in education — both secondary and primary — is the predominance, and indeed the absolute tyranny, of drill, and the high-pressure which, in the hands of a hard-working master, compels all the pupils to advance in unbroken line. We are in danger of forgetting the common-sense truth—that it is only what a pupil does for himself that is truly educative; and that the mind unconsciously sheds much of what it has unwillingly accepted, and also refuses to employ even the things it has retained. It is not the best and most powerful minds that have been made and built up in school and by school-work. Sir Humphry Davy writes to his mother and congratulates himself on the wholesome neglect he met with at school. "I perhaps owe," he says, "to this circumstance the little talents I have,"

and their peculiar application." Sir Walter Scott, who was an omnivorous reader, but certainly not a bright scholar according to the regulation pattern, thought that "the best part of every man's mind is that which he gives himself." Leslie declares that it was Fuseli's "wise neglect" of young Landseer that helped to make him what he afterwards became. Turner's father sent him to school to learn drawing; but it was not long before his master, a thoroughly competent man, sent young Turner back to his father with a note that lessons were thrown away upon him, that it was of no use trying to teach him, and that "the case was hopeless."

These are the commonplaces of educational controversy; but they all point to the important fact that spontaneous activity is the most valuable power in the mind, and to the duty of the wise teacher, who will endeavour to find out what direction this activity is taking, and encourage its growth. "People," says Rousseau, "do not understand childhood. With the false notions we have of it, the farther we go, the farther we go wrong. The wisest lay stress on what it is important for *men* to know, without considering what *children* are in a condition to learn."

The problem for modern teachers is a very difficult one. It is to reconcile the claims—the enormous claims—of modern education, with a reverence for the individual powers of each personality. Another aim—another problem quite as important—is to eliminate the didactic element from instruction, and so to make it an art. Many able young men in secondary schools are rising up to give practical solutions to these prob-



lems. The able teachers in primary schools have—or seem to have—even a more difficult task before them ; but they, too, by faith and perseverance, will at long and at last “beat their music out.”

The ‘Life of Dr Bell’ may give them here and there suggestions, may indicate some side-light which may help them towards the performance of their task, or may at least give some short but honest word of encouragement :—

“ Es rufen von drüben  
Die Stimmen der Meister  
Die Stimmen der Geister :  
‘ Versäumt nicht zu üben  
Die Kräfte des Guten !

Hier winden sich Kronen  
In ewiger Stille  
Die sollen mit Fülle  
Die Thätigen lohnen,  
Wir heissen euch hoffen ! ’ ”

But, whatever we who are elders and professional teachers may say and discuss and resolve, there sounds in our inner ear the cry of the children—a cry to which the whole past history of education has been somewhat deaf: “TAKE US WITH YOU !”

## LECTURE ON DR BELL.

[The following lecture was delivered in the Greek Classroom of St Andrews in 1877; and it is the sketch on which the preceding 'Life' is based. It may perhaps be of use to print it here as giving, in a very condensed form, the main facts regarding the educational theories and doings of the founder of the "Madras System of Education." That system is now forgotten; but what we must not forget is, that we owe to Dr Bell—through his trustees, Mr John Cook and the Earl of Leven and Melville—the founding of two Chairs of Education in the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews.]

In the year 1844, John Murray brought out, in three thick octavo volumes, the Life of the Rev. Dr Andrew Bell. This 'Life' was begun by Robert Southey, the well-known reviewer, literary man, historian, and poet-laureate. He died when the first volume was finished; and even this first volume had to be edited and carried through the press by the loving care of his wife, Caroline Bowles. The two last volumes were written by his son, the Rev. Charles Southey, of Queen's College, Oxford. These three large octavo volumes contain about 2000 pages; and they altogether form a mass of extremely dull and unattractive reading. This dulness is not so much due to the subject—a man whose life was very well worth writing—as to the extraordinarily

chaotic form in which the materials are presented to us. They are not presented, they are shot down at our feet. But for this one can hardly blame the reverend gentleman. Dr Bell had kept every letter, note, paper, pamphlet, or report he had received during a period of sixty years; and, as he knew almost everybody in England, Scotland, and the other two hemispheres, one can form some rude guess of the Chimborazo of rubbish he had managed to accumulate around him. His amanuensis, Mr Davies, toiled devotedly through this chaos, and gradually worked the facts in it down to fourteen octavo volumes. Robert Southey undertook the task of further reducing this,—he died in the process of the work, and Charles Southey continued it. Sometimes many hundred papers had to be searched for a single fact or date; and the same papers—many of them almost illegible—would sometimes pass through Mr Davies's hands some forty or fifty times. It took Mr Southey a year only to mark the papers which he wished Mr Davies to copy for him, and the result at last appeared in these three thick volumes. The first is readable, as everything Mr Southey wrote bears the marks of thought, diligence, literary form, and some grace; but the two last volumes could only be read under extraordinary circumstances,—by the offer of a great reward—in a country inn on a rainy day, after all the advertisements of the local newspapers had been perused—or by a first-class misdemeanor in prison. It is these three thick volumes that I propose to lay before you a very short view of.

Andrew Bell was an extraordinary man. I may even

go so far as to say he was an extraordinary Scotchman. In a country where every man has been framed in a mould, which was afterwards broken and no copy kept, it argues considerable force of mind or character to distinguish one's self at all. The son of a barber, with no fortune except the education he received at St Andrews, he goes to Virginia as a tutor, and makes a small fortune in tobacco; he comes home, and—though short-sighted—fights a duel in St Andrews, loses his money, takes orders in the Church of England, and goes to Madras—makes a large fortune in India—comes home, buys estates, marries a wife, rises to be a dignitary in the Church (and has a very near view of the mitre), writes a large number of books, shakes hands with princes, kings, and emperors, revolutionises education in the Old and the New World, leaves £200,000, bullies and terrifies his trustees before he dies, travels several hundred thousand miles, and makes a large number of warm-hearted friends,—surely this is experience enough to satisfy the appetite or the ambition of any one man.

He was born at St Andrews in the year 1753. His father was a barber in the city. He was a barber in the golden age of barbers—in the time when they did not cut hair, but built hair—built up enormous edifices of horse-hair, grease, and flour, without which no professor could lecture and no judge could try a case. But he was more than a barber. He was also a clock and watch maker, and something of an astronomer; he kept the University clock in order, and regulated it by observations; and he also invented a plan of casting types, which the great printers, Foulis of Glasgow, afterwards

employed. And he was much more than all this: he was also a bailie. Here one may be supposed to have reached the acme of human climbing. But there is more to come. He was the first man—or rather his wife was the first woman—in St Andrews to drink tea, and to possess a china tea-service. About a hundred and thirty years ago, he might have been seen walking down South Street, with two ample and architectonically-constructed wigs in front of him, one on each hand, well in front, lest by a collision they should spoil each other's form and beauty. After trimming one professor, he would sit down and breakfast with him; and then he would go off to another professor and trim, and sit down and breakfast with *him*. In fact, it was known that, in addition to his mental ability, he had the biggest appetite and the widest mouth in St Andrews. Besides the indisputable advantage of having strong eager Scotch blood in his veins, he had also a supply of sturdy Dutch blood from his maternal grandfather—a captain in the Dutch Guards of William of Orange. Once, in a hard time of scarceness approaching to famine, a meal-mob broke out in this quiet fifteenth-century University town; and he alone went out, and, with his Scoto-Dutch courage, put it down and sent the people quietly back to their homes.

This sturdy Scotchman had eight children, and Andrew was the second son. At the age of four, some one gave the child a penny, and he at once took up one of his brother's books, marched off to school, and offered the penny as his quarter's fee.

He matriculated at the University in 1769; and he

eked out his miserable bursary by private teaching. "He has often said that he never refused to teach anything, for he could always, by nightly study, prepare himself for giving the next day's lesson; and thus, what he had to teach, he acquired as he went along." I remember the head of a large school in Washington saying to me—"I can teach anything if I have the books;" but one recognises a prescientific flavour about these intellectual marvels, and can only say with Schiller—

"Ach ! was haben die Herren doch für ein kurzes Gedärm !"

He was a special favourite of the Professor of Natural Philosophy, Dr Wilkie. Wilkie would stroke his head and say—"Andrew, pursue your studies, and they will make your fortune. I never knew a man fail of success in the world, if he excelled in one thing." This Dr Wilkie was also an excellent farmer, and his plan in that was very similar—"to plough well and manure well; to lay the earth open to the influences of the sky, and return to it the remains and refuse of its own produce; and to keep the ground clean." This great Dr Wilkie, by the way, also wrote an epic on the Second War of Thebes, which he called "The Epigoniad." It may still be found in the University Library; but it sleeps with the fathers and the schoolmen and the early novels of the Della Cruscan type. Dr Wilkie was also very willing to oblige the neighbouring clergy, and to preach for them—which he did extemporaneously. It is said that, though "he never pursued the ordinary arts

of popularity, yet he never failed to fix the attention of his hearers." He certainly did. For he was peculiar, various, and even eccentric in his sentiments and reasoning; and he "generally preached with his hat on." He was immoderately fond of chewing tobacco, and abhorred nothing so much as clean sheets. When Lady Lauderdale asked him to stay all night, he said he could not sleep out of his own bed; but that, "if her ladyship would give him a pair of foul sheets, he would stay." Once, when he was visiting a relation, the mistress of the house put four-and-twenty blankets on his bed for the sake of the joke: in the morning, they asked him how he had slept, and if he had had plenty of clothes on him; and his reply was that he had had just enough.

But let us leave the great Dr Wilkie, and return to the great Dr Bell. He was only twenty when he left for Virginia to be tutor in the house of a merchant there, at a salary of £200 a-year. This was in 1774. In 1781 he came back to England with two of the sons of his employer, and was shipwrecked on the way. They escaped to land in the month of March, and were almost frozen to death. In daily expectation of this end, he made his will, and left his money and tobacco—he had nearly 30,000 lb.—to his father. But, in spite of hard frost and the thin walls of a tent, and rain and dreadful nights in open boats, he and his pupils arrived safe in London. He worked his way down to St Andrews—reached that city in the dark, and was not known by his own mother. It was at this time that he fought his duel—with a Mr Crookenden, an English student. Mr Bell was short-sighted and very eager; he

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therefore wheeled round sharp upon the signal, and delivered his fire before he had completed the wheel. The consequence was that he fired at the seconds, who first set up a shrill cry and then a great burst of laughter, which ended in their becoming fast friends, and all dining together with great hilarity.

He made friends wherever he went. The friends he made in Hertfordshire, for example, when they wished to enforce anything by emphatic asseveration, were ready to swear by the names of "Generosity and Honesty, or, which was the same thing—Mr Bell." In 1783, he brought his American pupils down to St Andrews; they attended the University, and he coached them. In the vacations, they began to work at five in the morning.

Here comes in a small episode, highly honourable to our friend—Bailie Bell. In 1784 there was an election; and the two candidates were Mr Dempster and a member of the Breadalbane family. As was usual in those times everybody had promised his vote to one or the other candidate, as political or other considerations weighed with him. It so happened that the votes were equal; and thus, to the worthy and clear-headed bailie the casting-vote fell, and, in fact, the election itself. The Breadalbane clan made this upright gentleman an offer of £500; and, in consequence, Mr Bell voted for Mr Dempster.

In the same year he was ordained in the Church of England, and received an offer of the incumbency of an Episcopal chapel at Leith. But Mr Dempster, who had now become his best friend, put it into his head to go to India, "that he might turn his talents and acquirements,



to good account as a philosophical lecturer '—for he was a good mathematician, and had learned much from his guide, philosopher, and friend, Dr Wilkie. Accordingly, he set off in 1787, with £128, 10s. in his pocket. His destination was Calcutta, but he stopped at Madras. When he reached that port, measures were on foot to establish a military orphan asylum for boys; and Dr Bell — for St Andrews had made him M.D. — was thought to be “a person eminently qualified to superintend the education of children.” He now began to give short courses of lectures on natural philosophy; and, by the first course, he made £360. In 1789 he had to undergo the set sorrow—the inevitable grief of losing his father; and he speaks of this as “the death of as good a father, and as just and upright a man, as ever lived.”

The small fortune he had accumulated during his seven years' stay in Virginia had been lost, for it was invested in tobacco; but his “great and rapid success” in India enabled him to provide with ease for his sisters in Scotland. At this time he was constantly lecturing in Calcutta, Madras, and elsewhere; and he also held five deputy-chaplainships, the duties of which could not have been very arduous. A man of constantly stirring and active mind, he was the first man to make ice in India, and also the first man to construct a balloon. When war broke out, he was appointed chaplain to the army before Pondicherry, at a handsome salary; and, when the batteries were opened, he went into the trenches—and came out again uninjured.

It is about this time that he begins to take a strong

interest in the Madras Asylum School. The school was, aptly enough, supported to a large extent by the fines exacted for drunkenness from the men in the army. The boys were mostly of mixed origin,—“blue boys” they were called,—but their fathers were all Europeans. They were to be taught only the three R’s, and they were to be kept as much as possible from their mothers and their mothers’ kin. When Dr Bell took the superintendence of the institution, he found the masters in a condition of permanent mutiny. As soon as a master had fitted himself for his work, he found out he could get a higher salary for far less work—and he naturally took it. Dr Bell was at his wits’ end; and he could not get a single change or improvement in the school carried out.

So things were, when he happened one morning early to ride along the shore on the Malabar coast. He by chance rode past a school, and stopped to look at the children. They were writing with their fingers on the sand. He galloped home, shouting to himself “*Eureka! Eureka!*” and the Madras System was discovered. He gave immediate orders to the usher of the lowest classes to teach the alphabet in the same manner, with this difference from the Malabar mode, that the sand was strewn upon a board! Most fortunately his orders were disregarded, and the master peevishly declared that “it was impossible to teach the boys that way.” He now bethought himself of employing a boy; and he soon lighted on a bright, intelligent, and quick little lad of the age of eight; his name was John Frisken; and little Johnnie Frisken is the head corner-stone of

the world-famous Madras System. Then other little boys were appointed as assistant-teachers; young Frisken was made head-superintendent; and at last this part of the school was placed entirely in his hands. To his little teacher "a smile of approbation was no mean reward, and a look of displeasure—and the Doctor had black, heavy, bushy eyebrows—sufficient punishment." This was in the year 1791. It is necessary to be particular as to the date, because later on a violent quarrel arose as to whether Dr Bell or Joseph Lancaster was the originator of the system of mutual tuition,—a quarrel in which we have neither part nor sympathy. The masters gave him no end of trouble: one of them took to ill-using the little boys, biting their fingers and pinching their ears, so that the good, eager, and irascible Doctor was more and more thrown into the arms of his little boys. And now our young friend Frisken, at the early age of eleven, had charge of a third of the whole school—which numbered about three hundred boys. / One master he dismissed: a doubtful person, but his place was desired by one still more doubtful. His application, which is very curious, contains among other things: "I have been told that you was a very odd / kind of a gentleman, and very fond of abusing and quarrelling with the teachers, when they were not even in the least fault imaginable." Another applicant was a German gentleman, of the name of Piezold. Dr Bell was very anxious to get Mr Piezold, and Mr Piezold was very anxious to get to Dr Bell. But there was one difficulty in the way. That difficulty was Mrs Piezold. Mr Piezold wrote: "As I, being a man of family, can't

act arbitrarily in the matter you are concerned in, but must absolutely accommodate myself to the humours and dispositions of Mrs Piezold, to her liking and disliking, pleasing and not pleasing ; so I am necessitated to give up the whole scheme as soon as she uttereth the tart reply and objection, *although* the loss arising from that resignation be ever so great." Happy and wise Mr Piezold ! Timely happy, and timely wise ! He had learnt to the utmost the well-known lesson :—

"The man's a fool who tries by force or skill  
To stem the current of a woman's will ;  
For, if she will, she will, you may depend on't,  
And, if she won't, she won't, and there's an end on't."

Everywhere Dr Bell was a great favourite with children ; and that is a first-rate test of character and disposition. The Rev. Mr John, a Danish missionary, writes to him — "My house resounds still with encomiums of our tender, beloved Dr Bell. Mary Ann, Dickey, Jackey, the little female philosopher Kitty, and August—every one cry almost after you, and complain why I have let you depart so soon."

And now, in 1796, "the education at the Asylum, under Dr Bell's vigilant superintendence, was so complete, as far as it went, and the character of the boys in consequence so good, that applications were made for them from all quarters." The great conqueror, Tippoo Saib, sent for one of them, named Smith, to come and show him the electrical machine, the condensing engine, and other interesting specimens of mechanism.

Dr Bell liked India, and the climate seemed to agree with him. He says, in a letter to Mr Dempster: "What

a delightful climate this is ! The weather never changes for months. If we had only domestic society like yours in Great Britain, I know not who would quit India. I know not who would but to repent of it." But I have met many men who grew sick of the blue sky and the brown faces. I remember a young man I knew who had come home for a holiday from a station in the back parts of the Punjaub, and who told me he had not seen an Englishwoman's face for years; and he used to sit for whole days in his window at his lodgings, and fill his whole soul with the pleasant home-looks of the passers-by. Another—an officer coming home—on his arrival in the Channel, shouted "Hurrah ! there are the old dirty clouds again; good-bye to the nasty, eternal, monotonous blue !" But the climate and the unrelenting blaze of sultry sun at last began to tell upon him in the year 1794, and this compelled him to think seriously of coming back to his native country. He felt he had done a good deal of work, and that he "had wrought a complete change in the morals and character of a generation of boys." He accordingly returned to England by way of the Cape—for there was then no other way—with about £25,000 in his pocket.

Here let me pause to glance a little at the correspondence appended to the end of the first volume. The letters are from all sorts and conditions of women and men, and they here and there give us a glimpse of the way of living and thinking three generations ago. It is somewhat comic, for example, to find one of Mr Bell's young pupils writing in this way: "Our meeting with papa and mamma was joyful beyond description. The

engine of paternal affection was conjoined with that of surprise." But this is only one of the good results of a classical education. Again, when Mr Bell consults his friend, Mr Dempster, on the best course of political study for a young peer, Mr Dempster says that this study is summed up in the old proverb, "Honesty is the best policy."

In another letter we find Dr Bell sending Mrs Berkeley "a dozen elegant dried bottle bonnets." What these bonnets are I cannot tell; I have made inquiries in various directions, but without result. Considering, however, the fact that bonnets have been waxing and waning, growing into and out of all shapes, growing beyond and beneath knowledge, transforming themselves from gigantic tunnels and coal-scuttles, which they were in 1836, into almost invisible half-crowns, it is not difficult to believe that historic darkness and oblivion will settle for ever on the particular form of a bottle bonnet. ✓ It is, perhaps, an even greater mystery why Mrs Berkeley should have a dozen. Mrs Berkeley also mentions "a young Scot," who is one of the six preachers of the Canterbury Cathedral. It gives a clearer idea of the arduous nature of the labour of these gentlemen that they preach two sermons a-year each. And Mrs Berkeley's moral is well worth pondering: "My advice to all people who mean to succeed is ever to plough with the heifer, if they mean to rise; for, whether the lords of the creation know it or not, or are too proud to own it, we women, one way or other, openly or under the rose, whether we be wife, sister, or daughter, guide the world." The same sprightly lady abuses without limit the weather

of Canterbury, and says: "Alas! we have not had a St Andrews winter. I wished myself there all this vile, frosty, severe weather. If I had a good gas balloon Mrs Frenshaw and I both declare that we would set off in it in the beginning of November, and stay till May; then off again to England. An Edinburgh winter may be bad enough, but in London I never suffered so little cold as I did in St Andrews in winter." I heartily agree with Mrs Berkeley, and I admire even more intensely than she can the climate and the pearly tints and soft golden lights of the lovely skies of this ancient capital. We have fuchsias growing in the open air, and wisteria and jessamine; and I have myself seen roses blowing in December. So that we can handicap ourselves up here—give Canterbury ten degrees to the good and to the south, and yet beat her in an easy canter.

Another correspondent, the Rev. Mr Millingchamp, writes to Dr Bell from Canton, and gives him some account of the natural history of the Chinese. "There are two species of air; or, as the Yüking more pointedly expresses it, the air has two sexes. When they agree, the seasons are regular, the weather favourable, corn grows, &c. When they disagree, and the she-air will not permit the he-air to approach her, the consequences are terrible. He flies round her in a whirlwind or typhoon; earthquakes are caused by the male air enclosed in the bowels of the earth and struggling to make his escape. The souls of good men after death take up their residences in the he-air and become josses or semi-gods: the souls of bad men pass into the she-air, and become so many devils." This is quite in accordance

with the character of the Chinaman. A country in which roses have no fragrance, wheel-barrows are driven by sails, roads have no vehicles, ships no keel, workmen no Sabbath, and magistrates no sense of honour; where the place of honour is the left, the sign of being puzzled is to scratch the knee, and the seat of intellect the stomach,—is a country where men will believe anything.

Mr Dempster writes to him in 1792 to come home. "The truth is," he says, "Nature calls us strongly back to our original haunts; where we sought our birds'-nests is the spot where we wish to smoke our pipe and take our snuff in old age. There was a man who retired some time ago from Copenhagen with a fortune, to build a house underground, and live upon train-oil at home. So return you will, and encounter with pleasure the north winds of the Scores and the links of St Andrews."

Another friend and correspondent warns Dr Bell not to speak so loud in argument, and, at least now and then, to allow others to say something. "Mrs Floyd's remarks on the pitch of your voice in argument are not wholly unfounded. *Turn about* is fair play; and your colloquist has a right to be heard sometimes."

And so Dr Bell came home with the desire in his heart for what he calls "the only solid comfort of life,—a union with an amiable and sweet partner;" and he left the too brilliant shores of India with the good wishes of everybody—down to Tellisigna Pillah, who "presents his respectful compliments to Dr Bell, and much regrets that a severe cold, which confines him at



home, prevents him from having the pleasure of wishing Dr Bell a pleasant voyage in person."

#### DR BELL AT HOME.

Dr Bell came home, too, with the report of the Madras Asylum in his pocket, which he made up his mind to publish under the title of "An Experiment in Education, made at the Male Asylum at Madras, suggesting a System by which a School or Family may teach itself under the superintendence of the Master or Parent." He already believed in his System—as he had believed in himself—with his whole soul. Even the printer he tried to convert. "You will work for an enthusiast," he says; "but if you and I live a thousand years, we shall see this System spread over the world." The chief advantages, he points out, are at present two: "The younger ones can read and spell to the monitors twice or thrice in the morning and afternoon, when to the master not more than once. The elder boy, while he is teaching his class, is instructing himself." And one of his masters thus writes: "I had a boy, who is the dullest, heaviest, and the least inclined to learning I ever had, who, having for six months past wrote upon sand, and read alternately and constantly while at school, is now able, not only to spell every word, but can tell me many words, let me ask him where I will; and he appears now to have an inclination to learning, to which, when he first came, he had an utter aversion." The children wrote with their fingers or with a stylus upon damp sand.

In the year 1800 Dr Bell's friends are of opinion

that he meditates taking a wife. "It is the general belief," says Mrs Dempster, "of all my female friends that you would only hire so dear a house, and keep a carriage, with a view to fascinate some coy damsel." Dr Bell, who was now 47, seems to have agreed with these ladies; for, on the 3d of November, he married Agnes Barclay, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Dr Barclay, of Middleton.

In 1801 he is presented with the living of Swanage, in Dorsetshire,—not a bad living, of the value of over £600 a-year. To this residence he goes; and here, for the first time, we get some glimpse of his personal manners in a schoolroom. He goes into the Sunday-school of a Mr Stickland in the village of Swanage, paces up and down the room, asks questions, explains passages, hurries from class to class, and absorbs all the attention of the children, who were not accustomed to the vision of a black-browed, fiery-eyed, eager Scotchman, until Mr Stickland was obliged to call to him—"Sir, sir, will you be pleased to pitch yourself!" He hammered his injunctions into the monitors, Mr Stickland used to say, "like a blacksmith on an anvil." But his love for children was always with him; and he seems always to have been able to win their hearts, even when he bullied them into tears. Of the introduction of his System into the Swanage school he himself says: "It is like magic; order and regularity started up all at once. In half an hour more was learned, and much better, than had been done the whole day before. They quit the school at dismissal with reluctance, and they return before their time to renew the competition."

He also introduced vaccination into Swanage, and "set all the old women and others in the neighbouring parishes inoculating with vaccine matter." One of his parishioners, an old man of eighty-four, thus spoke of him: "You may travel far and near without finding his equal; it is true he was irritable and passionate in his temper, but there are none without their faults." And then the old man begins to philosophise: "We are all made up of a compound matter,—earth, air, fire, and water; and Dr Bell had certainly more of the fire than of the other ingredients in his composition. But if the blaze was larger and more fierce, it was sooner over; and people of this description are more loving, and have better and warmer hearts than generally fall to the lot of others."

And now we come to Dr Bell's connection with and relation to another remarkable man, Joseph Lancaster. Joseph Lancaster was one day walking from Deptford to Greenwich, when his attention was attracted by an inscription, "To the glory of God and the benefit of poor children;" and while he was meditating on this, the children burst forth into singing. His heart was melted; and "it pleased God to implant within me a wish and desire that *I* might one day *thus* honour Him; and through all the vicissitudes of the intervening period, my hope was seldom long clouded. I knew not how it was to be accomplished; but, being assured that it was a divine impression, my mind was constantly endeavouring to find out a way. I had not long entered into the straw-hat business; but I was persuaded this was the channel to accomplish my wish." He adopted the mu-

tual system, and found he "had no more labour with 250 children than he had formerly with 80." In the year 1804, he was anxious to become acquainted with Dr Bell; and he wrote him a letter beginning "Respected Friend," and ending "Thy obliged friend and admirer." It is an odd sign of those educational times, that Lancaster enumerates among his chief difficulties, "the price of sand in London, 9s. the load." In one of his letters, Dr Bell tells us that Joseph Lancaster tried "to form his teachers by lectures on the passions." Dr Bell's more practical mind asserts that "it is by attending the school, seeing what is going on there, and taking a share in the work of teaching, that teachers are to be formed, and not by lectures and abstract instruction." The fact is both these men were right; and if you could have rolled them into one, you would have had a first-rate professor of education. But now a lady made a great discovery—a discovery that was destined to make people's hair stand on end, to unsettle the wigs and tempers of the gravest bishops, and to spread fear and dismay throughout the fabric of society. This lady was Mrs Trimmer. The discovery she made was that "there was something in Joseph Lancaster's plan that was inimical to the interests of the Established Church." And so Mrs Trimmer sounded her war-bugle; and forthwith Churchman and Dissenter, Bishop and Quaker, Tory and Whig, set to work pounding each other hammer and tongs. This discovery was made by Mrs Trimmer on the 24th of September 1805; and in the letter announcing her great discovery, she calls this quiet, unoffending, enthusiastic, straw-hat-making Quaker, "a

Goliath of schismatics." Alas! even celestial minds are seized by rage; and even good Christians hit upon this too fiery method of stating that they do not agree with each other. The art of calling names is a great, a recondite, and a useful art; and it has been practised in all ages by the greatest men. Let us hear what Luther says of Aristotle—whom he mixed up with the erroneous developments and wrong-headed logicians of his time: "Truly a devil, a horrid calumniator, a wicked sycophant, a prince of darkness, a real Apollyon, a beast, a most horrid impostor on mankind, one in whom there is scarcely any philosophy, a public and professed liar, a goat, a complete epicure, the thrice execrable Aristotle." And Mrs Trimmer follows, but with unequal steps, the majestic pace and thunderous objurgation of the great Luther. And even Dr Bell does not think much of poor Joseph. He tells Mrs Trimmer that he had "observed his consummate front and his importunate solicitation of subscriptions in any and every shape," and he insinuates that he is a "conceited and ignorant quack." Mrs Trimmer keeps at it. On the 1st of October, she discovers that the quiet gentleman whom she calls "our friend Joseph," was "not originally a Quaker, but an Anabaptist, intended by his father for what they call a *minister*." The contempt and the italics are Mrs Trimmer's. "Whether he changed for the love of a pretty Quaker, whom he married, or whether the *broad-brim* was the best cover for his schemes," etc. Too suspicious and improper Mrs Trimmer! to attempt to read motives which can be known only to the Maker of Joseph Lancaster and yourself. On the 30th of Novem-

ber in the same year (1805), she further discovers that Lancaster is "ignorant of every principle of good education, and his plan is a direct perversion of yours." Here we may pause to notice a social phenomenon; and it is this: There is a large number of people in the world who will not allow you to do anything unless you do it in their way; and there is another large number of people who will not allow you to do anything unless you have discovered the ideal—the best possible and conceivable method of doing it. For my part, I agree with the opinion of the Duke of Wellington—"Her Majesty's Government must be carried on." If there is motion and life at all, there is some power of alteration and of improvement; and for this we must always be thankful. On the 11th of December, Dr Bell—his internal fires heated by the bellows of Mrs Trimmer—finds out that Lancaster is "illiterate and ignorant, with a brazen front, consummate assurance, and the most artful and plausible address, not without ability and ingenuity, heightened in its effects under the Quaker's guise." In March 1806, Mrs Trimmer announces that the bishops have been got at, and that "the dignitaries of the Church, even the *highest*, are fully convinced of the danger of the plan of forming the children of the lower orders into *one organised body*." (The italics are hers.) Fancy this: The-children-of-the-lower-orders-in-one-organised-body marching upon the Church! Now, beyond all question, the Church was in danger. But what an attack, and what a revolution! It was a revolution that might have been bought off with sugar-candy, and an attack to be met with toys and picture-

books. If only the worthy bishops could have read the signs of the times, and put themselves at the head of this "organised body of the children of the lower orders." The lower orders!—But it is much more pleasant to turn to Dr Bell at his true work of teaching. "Here," says Mr Davies, "would he often come, and, humbling himself to the capacity of a little child, would take a class, and prove his power by drawing out the infant mind." Unfortunately the difference between Dr Bell and Lancaster assumed the form of a personal dispute as to priority of discovery, on which it would be useless to enter here and now.

In 1808 the System was introduced into Ireland. There it superseded an older and more vicious system, under which "the boy who had written the best copy ✓ was ordered by the master to pull the hair of the boy who had written the worst, and so to do until they arrived at their seats in the school again." This is the pious and charming Arcadian simplicity which always, in one part of the world or other, is waiting for the return of the coming Astræa.

In 1809, Dr Bell is made Master of Sherburn Hospital, near Durham. This was an old foundation for the benefit of lepers and old men. The daily allowance of the lepers was "a loaf weighing five marks, and a gallon of ale to each; and betwixt every two a mess or commons of flesh three days in the week, and of fish, cheese, or butter on the remaining four; on Michaelmas-day, four messes or a goose,"—and so on.

THE SYSTEM was now making progress in every direction, both in London and the country, and in 1810 it

made its way into some of the great classical schools. But in 1811 the great controversy broke out in another form. Lord Radstock now took the trumpet in hand, and blew a blast of warning to the bench of bishops. He wrote to the 'Morning Post,' that he dreamt he saw the whole of the bench of bishops dressed in their robes, with their mitres on their heads, and all in a most profound sleep. Then came a chubby-faced little man (this was the fearful enemy discovered by Mrs Trimmer to be the Goliath of the Philistines, and whom Southey elsewhere called THE DRAGON), in an entire drab-coloured suit, and a broad-brimmed hat, and after eyeing the bishops "with a sort of supercilious and insulting air," suddenly exclaimed, in a slow and sonorous tone of voice, "Ye slothful and mouldering puny dignitaries, have ye not slumbered your fill?" and so on. Next Lord Radstock "perceived a lovely youth standing by my side clad in white, and of heavenly mien. 'Be of good cheer,'" he said, etc. The lovely youth was Dr Bell, who was by this time fifty-eight. Then Lancaster wrote to the papers; then Dr Bell; Mrs Trimmer joined with her light skirmishers; one or two bishops brought up their heavy guns; and there was the usual amount of noise, and insinuation, and recrimination and dust, and missing the mark, and neglecting the children through it all. Dr Bell had unfortunately said that he did not propose to educate the children of the poor in an expensive manner, "nor even to teach them to write and to cipher," whereupon Lancaster jumped up and accused him of advocating "the universal limitation of knowledge." All this, however, has no interest for



us now, but may well take its place in a "Museum of Educational Fossils."

In the end of the year 1811, Dr Bell had induced a number of noblemen and gentlemen to found a Society, which was called the NATIONAL SOCIETY, which still exists, has done a great deal of good work, and is still doing a great deal of good work. And the great poet Wordsworth, about this time, cheers on Dr Bell by telling him that he is happy "to think in the present, afflicted state of Europe, that there is at the least one small portion of it where men are acting as if they thought that they lived for some other purpose than that of murdering and oppressing each other." He was invited to pay a visit to Lord Kenyon, a great friend of his, and an enthusiastic admirer of his educational ideas; and his lordship gave orders to his butler to present every man-servant and labourer in his employment with a guinea. The butler brought him the list and apologised for its length. "It cannot," Lord Kenyon replied, "be too long on such an occasion, when so great and good a man pays us a visit for the first time." In these volumes we get glimpses—very partial glimpses, but still worth something—of Wordsworth, Southey, S. T. C., and Hartley Coleridge. Miss Wordsworth sometimes polished Dr Bell's English for him; but he was not quite satisfied with this—and who is? The English language is so vast a field, and provides so many different ways of writing down one's sense, that every one likes to wander about in it at his own sweet will, and not to be set right by any one whatever. A young Mr Bamford becomes one of his *protégés*. This gentleman

tells some remarkable stories about the memory of H. Coleridge, who was one of his class-fellows. "Hartley was very irregular in his time of attending school. He used to run in about ten o'clock, with his hat on his head, chewing a slate-pencil in his mouth. 'Where have you been?' said the master. Hartley, laughing, 'I really don't know.' 'You are a strange fellow, Hartley, to go on in this way. Get me sixty lines of the tenth book of the Iliad.' 'Shall I say them now, sir?'" While visiting a friend of Wordsworth's, Sir George Beaumont, he received a letter from a friend in Leicestershire, telling him that "several families in his neighbourhood have been rendered a heaven upon earth by teaching." And a learned judge writes to the same gentleman, "I really think that his plan, if rightly conducted, is one of the most stupendous engines that ever have been wielded, since the days of our Saviour, for the advancement of God's true religion upon earth."

Dr Bell's chief occupation in 1813 was acting as general inspector of all his schools; and his favourite pupil, Mr Bamford, tells us that he could not give this up, that "his feelings of restless vanity, unless relieved by indulgence, would have made him intensely miserable." He scolded and bullied the masters in presence of their pupils; and "his style of talking to them, and remarks, with a kind of boundless rage and bluster, were, in their situation, not only unkind and unnecessary, but vexatious and oppressive." "He regarded money," Mr Bamford goes on to say, "as the *primum mobile* and the only efficient stimulant in the world." He excited masters by a negative kind of threat. He

said, "Do this, or you shall be mulcted, or leave your situation." The masters were subject to weekly and monthly fines; and he paid "according to the periodical state of the school." "I can do more," said he to the Archbishop of Canterbury, taking half-a-crown out of his pocket, "I can do more with this half-crown than you can do with all your fixed salaries." May we not, then, justly regard Dr Bell as the Father of the System of Payment by Results? Great warriors lived before Achilles, but there was no Homer to sing their praises, and great practical, or pragmatists, educationists have also existed before Mr Robert Lowe.

The correspondence to the second volume has not much of interest. But, in one letter of Dr Bell's to the famous Mr Edgeworth, we find that he has taken a terrible dislike to all teachers, and a corresponding ✓ affection for all pupils. He says: "It is among the children and youth of the school that I have learned what I know, not among their masters, sometimes as prejudiced, bigoted, and perverse, as their scholars are ingenuous, ingenious, and tractable. It is in this book, I have said, that I acquired what I know; and it is in this book I have recommended you to study—a *school full of children*." Mr Dempster writes to tell him to get "presented at Court, and now and then to attend the *levées*; get better acquainted with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, etc.; bustle to be made canon or prebendary; that is the road to a bishopric;" and so on. An able correspondent, Mr D. P. Watts, sends Dr Bell an account of an accident with some sensible educational commentaries. There are, unfor-

tunately, still a number of people who think they must act the part of Providence to their neighbours, and arrange everything "for their good." At the close of his letter, Mr Watts makes the remark: "The stability of a country begins in the *school*." The same correspondent mentions the death of a "schoolmaster in Swabia, who had superintended a seminary fifty-one years with severity. He had given 911,500 canings, 124,000 floggings, 209,000 custodies, 136,000 tips with the ruler, 10,200 boxes on the ear, 22,700 tasks by heart, 700 stands upon peas, 600 kneels on a sharp edge, 500 fools' caps, 1700 holds of rods." After this, one can only ask, almost fainting: where were the police? Poor Lancaster is attacked in this correspondence also. Mr Southey goes so far as to say that he "will convict him of falsehood and deal with him accordingly." In another letter, he says, "The Dragon"—meek little chubby-faced Lancaster—"is now in the same state as the old serpent at Wantley, when Moore of Moore Hall had given him the last fatal kick."

In 1815 Dr Bell comes back to Scotland and revisits St Andrews. But he did not care for the country or the scenery, but only for the schools. "Nothing," he says, "is curious, or interesting, or beautiful in my eye but the face of children—but the infant mind—but the spiritual creation." In 1816 a Committee was formed, with Principal Playfair as its chairman, to introduce Dr Bell's system into his native city. The plan of this Committee is sent to him, and he replies that he will give material aid, on his own principle, to wit, that "a

✓ salary given, independent of success, is a premium for neglecting duty."

In August of this year he goes to the Rhine and sails down it "on a raft, everywhere within an inch of the surface of the water, except two watch-towers for the steersman, which have a commanding view of the surrounding country. This float of timber is 700 feet long and 70 wide, and carries only four houses, and fifty men engaged in its navigation. Some floats have 40 houses, numerous families, and are larger in proportion." In this excursion he meets with the great Pestalozzi, whom he calls "a man of genius, benevolence, and enthusiasm." About this time, too, commissioners are sent to wait upon him to learn his System—from Sweden, Switzerland, and Russia. In 1818 he received the offer of a stall in Hereford Cathedral. He had to preach four English and four Latin sermons, to sit for forty days in the prebendal stall without any duty to perform, to sit three hours every Sunday and holiday, and twice every week-day, and never to walk beyond the walls of the city during this period. In 1818 he preached a sermon on his System, kept his amanuensis up a night and a day copying it, preached for an hour, and took off his spectacles to wipe them—when the congregation thinking he had come to an end, rose up, and the good Doctor shouted "'God bless my soul!' and, instantly recommencing, went on for half an hour longer." In 1817 the Emperor of Russia sends him a diamond ring.

I must now pass over the remaining years, and come to 1831. "His money," says his biographer, "was now a burden to him." Much of his time was spent in

making wills; and Mr Davies, his secretary, spent much of *his* time in copying and recopying them. On the 11th of May 1831, he writes to his bankers to transfer £120,000 to certain gentlemen in St Andrews, entreats them "to make all despatch—no time must be lost." This was done. Meanwhile, Miss Bell wanted to come and see him at Cheltenham, where he was living: he wrote to say she might come, and as soon as the letter had gone, he wrote to say she must not. She came however, and he gave her his cottage, a covering used at the coronation of George the Fourth, his silver plate, gold coins, rings, tea-service, trinkets, and money. But Miss Bell got it into her head that her distinguished brother "was not in his right mind," and that he was not in a fit state to make his will. The Doctor discovered this, and placed a paper in her hands ordering her to leave his house immediately. He was every day becoming more and more impatient to hear what was doing with his money. "My solicitude distresses me much. Excuse my anxiety. There is danger in the delay of a day." In June he wants all his money to be thrown into Chancery, and the trustees along with it. He next asks the trustees to come down to Cheltenham to see him.

Picture to yourself the situation. An old man, nearly eighty, who had totally lost the power of speech, with his faculties and eager spirit all alive, but without the power of giving adequate expression to them, with £120,000 to give away and no one to trust, with the belief that his System was to be the salvation of the world, and yet with little hope of seeing this System con-

fided to good and safe hands. The trustees, when they came, found him with his head sunk upon his breast, and he could talk with them only through a slate. He asked them for a plan. "When will you have it? Can you bring it to me to-night at eight o'clock, or to-morrow morning? A plan we must have," etc., etc. But a plan for a college, and for the right investment of £120,000, cannot be made in an hour. "The trustees were methodical in their way of doing business; he was capricious and vehement. They were slow; he was quick. They were very patient; he was at times very violent. Fire and water would have combined more easily." After the trustees left, he enters into a long and violent correspondence with them; he accuses them of "concocting the trust-deed, and that they surreptitiously obtained it from him, under circumstances of painful and disqualifying enactment." They reply firmly but modestly; he tells them their "declamation is written to give a death-blow to my debilitated condition, or for a posthumous epistle to the grave, which tells no tales." He tells them to write by return of post, and by every post. He writes a holograph deed on the 21st of December, and he executes another on the 29th, which he says "perhaps supersedes it." He speaks of the "studied embarrassments, machinations, devices, and distortions, and perversions of the propositions of a dying, speechless, and insulated man, with funds undisposed of, and the multiplication of writings contrived for this purpose are inconceivable by those who are not in such a situation." His last wishes were expressed in a paper which he drew up at intervals

shortly before his death. He signified his approval of this twelve hours before his departure ; but he did not live to sign it.

His intellect and memory were unimpaired, and his affections were as eager as ever. At half-past ten on the night of the 27th of January, his doctor said to him, "How are you, my dear sir?" and in half an hour afterwards his breathing became languid ; and at length gently and calmly ceased altogether ; and no man saw at what moment the fiery, passionate, enthusiastic soul took its departure for another world. He only quietly ceased to be. He was buried among the illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey.

The correspondence in the third volume need not detain us long. Dr Gray writes from Bishopwearmouth about "Harrogate damsels and ladies, young, handsome, and accomplished ; of barons and baronets enthralled ; and of schools enthusiastically patronised." We, of this generation, may be thankful that we have got beyond that : we only want our work to take its right place among other kinds of work, without prejudice and without patronage. George Dempster draws an enthusiastic picture of the result of Dr Bell's labours : "Ploughmen, between their yokings, reading the Old Testament ; the New read by milkmaids and dustmen ; cobblers solving problems algebraically ; and girls drawing maps of Europe on their samplers." And he repeats his advice to Dr Bell to strive for the mitre ; "bishoprics have been obtained for trumpery essays on chemistry, and archbishoprics for flogging Westminster schoolboys,—then, why not you?"



You will perhaps agree with me that it has not been uninteresting to take a backward look on the early beginnings of popular instruction in this country; and if any one should ask for the moral of Dr Bell's story, I think it is to be found in the divine words,—words which are written in letters of fire upon the face of the commonest human life. “The fashion of this world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” And this, too, is a voice straight from Heaven: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is neither wisdom nor device in the grave, whither we all hasten.”

## EXTRACTS FROM DR BELL'S WORKS.

[The Educational works of Dr Bell amount to several thousand pages; but they cannot be recommended to the perusal of even the most enthusiastic student of education. There is much dust, chaff, and inorganic matter in them; and it is only here and there that one finds something worth picking up. I have thought it right to go carefully through the volumes, and to select what might possibly be worth reading and thinking about. This is contained in the following pages.]

“The advantages of teaching the alphabet, by writing the letters with the fingers in sand, are many. It engages and amuses the mind, and so commands the attention, that it greatly facilitates the toil, both of the master and the scholar. It is also a far more effectual way than that usually practised, as it prevents all learning by rote, and gives, at the instant and in the first operation, a distinct and accurate notion of the form of each letter, which in another way is often not acquired after a long period, and after a considerable progress in reading, as may be seen in those who write letters turned the wrong way, and other instances familiar to every one. It likewise enables them, at the very outset, to distinguish the letters of a similar cast, such as *b*, *d*, *p*, and *q*, the difficulty of which is known to almost every person who has

taught or learned the alphabet, as it is commonly taught and learned. While it thus removes every obstacle which at first puzzles beginners, and interrupts their progress, it at the same time teaches the scholar to write, and is the best preparation he can have for this next stage of his progress."

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"When a bad, lying boy comes to school, the teacher of the lower classes must find a good boy to take care of him, teach him right principles like the other boys, treat him kindly, reconcile him to the school, and render him happy, like the rest, in his situation, and in his school and playfellows."

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"'All political writers are agreed, that on the education of youth depends the fate of empires.'—ARISTOTLE. Such have been the opinion and judgment of the greatest men and ablest writers, from the time of Aristotle to that of Burke, who pronounces 'education to be the cheap defence of nations.'"

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"The grand principle of Dr Bell's System, is the division of labour, applied to intellectual purposes. The objects are, 'to continue attention without weariness; to quit nothing until it is distinctly and permanently fixed on the mind; and to make the pupils the instruments of their own instruction.'"

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"In respect both of the distinctness of what is taught, and the mode of acquirement, the new system is pre-eminent. Nothing is proposed that is not clearly and distinctly learnt; and the manner in which that learning is acquired converts the schoolroom into a kind of literary playground; differing only from their common play-place in the greater eagerness

of the scholars to obtain their object, and in their deeper regret at failing in it. It is thus that delight prepares the way to improvement, and that pleasure becomes the handmaid of knowledge."

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"Our Saviour tells us, that if we enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must become as little children. It is thus, that among children, and from them, and by becoming as one of them, that we are to learn those simple doctrines of nature and truth, innate in them, or which readily occur to their minds, as yet unbiassed by authority, prejudice, or custom. It is in this school of nature and truth, pointed out by the Son of God, himself God, that I seek for knowledge. It is among the children and youth of the school, not among their masters, sometimes as prejudiced, bigoted, and perverse, as their scholars are ingenuous, ingenious, and tractable. It is in this book, I have said, that I acquired what I know; and it is in this book I have recommended you to study—a school full of children."

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"The first and grand law of the new school is, that every scholar, by a perpetual and generous competition with his fellows, finds for himself his level, and increasingly rises and falls in his place in the class, and in the ranks of the school, according to his relative attainments. It is thus that the dunces, as they are called, from other schools are no longer dunces when they enter a Madras school, and breathe a Madras atmosphere.

"The second main law of the Madras school is, that its instruction be conducted in a gradually progressive course of study by easy, adapted, and perfect lessons."

---

"Let no master, as he values the satisfaction and approba-

tion of the visitors and directors of his school—the profit and delight of his pupils—the gratification of their parents and friends—the good opinion of the public—and his own ease and comfort—think he has done his duty while he has a single child in his school who does not make daily progress according to his capacity—who is not perfectly instructed in every lesson as he goes along. But let it also be remembered that the scholar's time must not be wasted by repeating again and again what is already familiar to him, except as far as is necessary to prevent its being forgotten.”

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“1. The Asylum, like every well-regulated school, is arranged into forms or classes, each composed of as many scholars as, having made a similar progress, unite together. The scholar ever finds his own level, not only in his class, but also in the ranks of the school, being promoted or degraded from place to place according to his relative proficiency.

“2. Each class is, when preparing their lessons by themselves, paired off into tutors and pupils.

“Thus in a class of thirty-six scholars the eighteen best and most trusty are tutors respectively to the eighteen worst.

“This arrangement, by no means an important link in the chain of self-tuition, is frequently dispensed with ; and when continued lessons take place, as in the schools of the National Society, it is of course superseded.

“3. To each class is attached an assistant-teacher, whose business is, as the name implies, to act under, with, or for the teacher.

“4. The teacher who, with his assistant, has charge of the class, as well when learning as saying their lessons, and is responsible for their order, behaviour, diligence, and improvement. Both the teacher and his assistant say their lessons with their class. In the conduct of a school, the two

grand departments are instruction and discipline. 'Discipline' (says Ascham) 'without instruction is mere tyranny, and instruction without discipline little better than useless talk.'

---

"It is an unfounded complaint that very few learners are naturally endowed with the faculty of understanding the lessons which are prescribed to them, and that most do in reality lose their labour and time from defect of genius. Quite otherwise is the fact ; for you will find the generality of men quick in conception and prompt to learn. This is the characteristic of man. As birds are destined by nature to fly, horses to run, and wild beasts to be ferocious ; so to us is peculiar the (agitation) working and sagacity of the mind. Hence it is believed that the human soul is of celestial origin. The dull and the indocile are no more conformable to the nature of man than bodies which are accounted prodigies and monsters. But these are very rare."—QUINTILIAN.

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"Another practice of the Madras school is of high authority and remote antiquity in the Eastern world. 'Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground' (John viii. 6.) Writing on sand, borrowed from the Hindoo writing on the ground, is of a mixed nature, and applies to more than one branch of the scholars' studies—viz., to teaching the alphabet, digits, monosyllables, notation, arithmetic, and the art of writing itself. All the initiatory processes of the school being formed at the sand-board, the great difficulties and impediments of learning, which chiefly occur in the beginning of every branch of tuition, are conquered by an operation which gratifies the active disposition of youth, and their love of imitation ; and like the pen and pencil, ties down the mind to the single object in hand. Not a letter, a word, a figure can be passed over unknown or unlearned.

No task can be evaded by the scholar, repeated by rote, or done, as too often happens, by proxy."

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"Ascham says, 'The schole-house should be counted a sanctuary against fear.'"

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"Mr Locke, after stating his reason why 'the usual lazy and short way by chastisements and the rod, which is the only instrument of government that tutors generally know, or ever think of, is the most unfit of any to be used in education,' concludes, 'beating them (boys) and all other acts of slavish and corporal punishments, are not the discipline fit to be used in the education of those we would have wise, good, and ingenious men, and therefore very rarely to be applied, and that only on great occasions, and cases of extremity.' How would such a writer have rejoiced to have seen the engine of the new school at work!"

---

"Quintilian, as was noticed before, in denouncing corporal punishment, is of opinion that there would not be occasion for its exercise—'Si assiduus studiorum exactor adstiterit'—'if an assiduous exactor of his studies were to attend the pupil.'"

---

"'If it should be asked what is the one and great device for the improvement of memory, my answer would be, exercise and much employment. To reflect on many things, and as far as may be, every day, cannot but be attended with the best effect. Memory, more than anything, is either improved by cultivation, or falls off by neglect.'—QUIN. We must also recollect that this is accomplished by means as

much more lenient, as they have been found more efficacious than those usually employed, by means which abridge the labour of the master, expedite the progress of the scholar, and reduce the expense of the parent. And that the order and improvement of the school are produced by the amusement and interest which it creates to the children, while it gives life, spirit, and energy to every scholastic operation, and is calculated to render a grammar-school in reality, as well as in name, 'ludus literarius,' 'the literary play,' the wish of the ablest writers on this subject is accomplished beyond their expectation—'lusus hic sit.'"

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"'Were matters ordered right, learning anything they (children) should be taught, might be made a recreation to their play, as play is to their learning.'"—LOCKE.

---

"To sum up the whole ; the Madras System consists in conducting a school by a single master, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE SCHOLARS THEMSELVES, by a uniform and almost insensibly progressive course of study, whereby the mind of the child is often exercised in anticipating and dictating for himself his successive lessons, by which the memory is improved, the understanding cultivated, and knowledge uniformly increased—a course in which reading and writing are carried on in the same act, with a law of classification, by which every scholar finds his level, is happily, busily, and profitably employed every moment, is necessarily made perfectly acquainted with every lesson as he goes along, and without the use or the need of corporal infliction, acquires habits of method, order, and good conduct, and is advanced in his learning according to the full measure of his capacity."



"The principle on which, in teaching the Latin grammar, I proceed, is (as has been fully explained) the same as in teaching Euclid's elements, arithmetic, algebra, chemistry, geography, astronomy, or any branch of philosophy, or any art or science, and has been described in 'Elements of Tuition,' Part II. It is to reduce everything which is to be taught to a methodical arrangement, a regular gradation, beginning with what is plainest and simplest, and making that familiar by practice and repetition till it be fixed in the scholars mind as a habit, and proceeding gradually by short, easy, and almost insensible steps through the branches of science. This process is especially requisite with the elements and fundamentals of grammatical studies.

"If the syntax were composed on a scientific principle, its rules might, while greatly reduced in number, be rendered more comprehensive, more simple, more intelligible, and more easy of attainment. The rule to be observed in its composition is, that it be just and comprehensive in its principle, brief and systematic in its method, perspicuous and easy in its examples, and that usefulness be studied in every particular.

"*Ut grammatica præcepta fateor necessaria ; ita velim esse, quantum fieri possit, quam brevissima modo sint optima. Nec unquam probavi literatorum vulgus, qui pueros in his inculcandis complures annos remorantur.*

"*'As I acknowledge grammar rules to be necessary, so I would have them to be as brief as possible. Nor have I ever approved of the common herd of learned men who, in inculcating them, detain boys for several years.'*"—ERASMUS, *De Ratione Studii*.

---

"The scholar being now master of his grammar books, and initiated in the art of construing, translating, and parsing, proceeds to read the easiest prose classics, with or without a translation.

“‘In whatever way, let care be taken not to teach him too much at once, nor to set him upon a new part till that which he is upon be perfectly learned, and fixed in his mind.’”—  
LOCKE.

---

“He is never put into a new lesson, or new book, till he has well learned the former ; and never put into a book till a trial has been made of his ability being equal to the book. The simultaneous perusal of a variety of books at the commencement of the scholar's course of study, is in consonance with much that is done in a grammar-school, to perplex and confound the novice, at this early period. The perfect understanding of any one author is full exercise for the slender faculties. Nothing should be introduced that has a tendency to divert the attention from this one object, or to distract the mind.”

---

“Look at a regiment, or a ship, etc., you will see a beautiful example of the system which I have recommended for a single school. Look at the army and navy, etc., and you will see the grand system of superintendence which pervades all the works of men, and which will guide you in the general organisation of your schools. Only yours is a far less complicated machine. A single inspector-general, with his secretary, both nominated by Government, and removable at pleasure, will suffice to new-model the schools, receive reports, visit them, detect deficiencies, point out the cause of failure, and see that they are conducted according to the system chalked out for them, and the principles of the institution. In their various progress, in their subsidiary and subordinate improvements, and the additions to our present practices which will occur, a wide field of practical knowledge will be opened. Of the new creation which it will raise to religion, to society, and to the State, I shall say

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nothing. In each school classify, appoint, or rather, where the scholars have made any progress, let them appoint teachers and assistants to each class. Short lessons, short books."

---

"Let the progress be secure in every step, and you will be astonished at its flight. With new schools, and untaught children, you will have an easy task. Nothing is so facile and pleasant as to teach *ab initio*—nothing so difficult and ungracious as to unteach those who have been ill taught. Place into a well-regulated institution a boy who has been ill taught two or three years at an ill-conducted school, and a boy of the same age and capacity, who does not know a letter of the alphabet, and in a twelvemonth I shall expect to see the superiority inverted."

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